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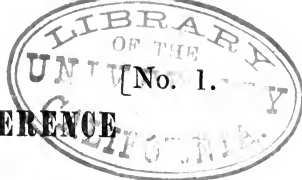
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THIS difference does not consist in the mere accidents of place, time, persons, and other necessarily variable circumstances of a religious profession; but in matters of sentiment, orders, worship, discipline, and support, involving the principles and genius of christianity, which are not affected by time, place, persons, or circumstances, and about which the scriptures have plainly, sufficiently, and imperatively unfolded the will of God.

Nor does it arise, to any perceivable amount, from the obscurities of the sacred narrative, or a misunderstanding of their proper application; but from the arbitrary assumption and officious exercise of power on the part of priests and princes to improve or change, according to their interests and vitiated fancies, what God has graciously settled for ever by an inspired agency.

Those Christians who really believe in the sufficiency and exclusive authority of divine revelation, in all religious affairs, and the individual accountability of men for their faith, worship, and conduct towards God, (the distinguishing principles of protestantism,) will agree with the following propositions:—

I. That the sacred scriptures were designed for every age and nation, and are perfectly adapted religiously to direct mankind of every condition and varied circumstance of civil and social existence—which was foreseen and amply provided for by their beneficent Author.

II. That they nowhere tolerate princes, popes, or parliaments, to alter, abridge, enlarge, or arbitrarily to interpret, the laws of heaven; or to enforce on mankind their inventions or glosses on the plea of moral, political, or religious expediency; or to institute a single ceremony, any more than to reject a cardinal doctrine.

III. And that no human beings can do this without acting the part of daring usurpers of divine prerogatives, and tyrannizing over the rights and consciences of men; who cannot, through ignorance, indifference, or fear, connive at, encourage, or comply with, such treasonable usurpation, without flagrantly violating their allegiance to Christ and incurring his high displeasure.

In exhibiting the appalling difference between the Church of Christ and the Church of England, I shall refer to no doubtful matters, nor make any assertions which I am not prepared to substantiate, to the satisfaction of every candid and intelligent person, by an appeal to the plain, fair, and common-sense meaning of the holy writings.

I. In the *Apostolical Churches* there was not the slightest recognition of kings, queens, princes, or parliaments, as being heads, legislators, or rulers in religious or ecclesiastical affairs—In the *Church of England*, such persons exercise the same dominion in spiritual, as they do in political, affairs.

II. In the *Apostolical Churches*, no doctrine, precept, or ceremony, was received or sanctioned, unless evidently by divine direction—In the Church

of England, many things are adopted without the least intimation of their being of God, and even when at direct variance with his word.

III. In the Apostolical Churches, (as testified by *Cranmer* and other chief episcopal divines,) there were only two permanent orders of ministerial officers, bishops and deacons, with divers appellations—In the Church of England, there are not less than a dozen of different degrees, the functions and names of nearly all of them being unknown to the Scriptures.

IV. In the Apostolical Churches the revealed will of God constituted the ONLY object of ultimate appeal to all ministers and private Christians—In the Church of England, the objects of ultimate appeal, in all matters of dispute, are rubrics, canons, and laws, of mere human device, and by these alone, can Churchmen, as such, be examined and judged.

V. In the Apostolical Churches no civil or corporeal pains or penalties were inflicted on members for transgressing the regulations of any Christian society—In the Church of England ecclesiastical offenders are often punished, as political culprits, with degradation, fines, and physical sufferings.

VI. In the Apostolical Churches all religious rights and privileges were exercised by their respective members, without any superior or foreign domination—In the Church of England, the members, as such, have no spiritual authority, being compelled to submit to the absolute controul of human laws.

VII. In the Apostolical Churches there were no spiritual courts in which ministers or their agents sat to adjudicate on wills, divorce, tithes, church-rates, &c.—In the Church of England such courts abound, and there the clergy often display their sectarian hatred against religious opponents.

VIII. In the Apostolic Churches, the right of private judgment was fully and practically conceded to every individual member—In the Church of England no such right is recognized—private judgment being either denied or rendered useless, by the compulsory creeds, canons, &c. of the hierarchy.

IX. In the Apostolical Churches all preachers and pastors regarded themselves as on a perfect official equality—In the Church of England there are numerous distinct grades of ministers, each exercising dominion over its inferior, who is obliged to succumb to its clerical superiors.

X. In the Apostolical Churches there was no annual assembling of ministers in a district to receive reproof from their ghostly superiors—In the Church of England, my Lord Bishop, Mr. Chancellor, and Mr. Archdeacon, frequently collect their clergy, to lecture them on their official obligations.

XI. In the Apostolical Churches, Christian ministers assumed no political authority or magisterial functions—In the Church of England prelates claim seats in the House of Peers; and parochial divines are frequently seen on the bench of justice—acting as “rulers and dividers” over the people.

XII. The Apostolical Churches were all Congregational and Independent (as the first authorities of the Establishment have frequently confessed)—The Church of England is one national hierarchy, made up of 10,000 little communions, dependent on the civil power for their ministers and support.

XIII. The Apostolical Churches were sustained entirely by the *voluntary*

contributions of those only who believed their doctrine, and desired its diffusion—The Church of England is supported by compulsory taxes, levied on all—pious and profane—Conformists and Dissenters—though the last have also to sustain their own respective interests.

XIV. The Apostolical Churches were located and ministers were settled, as population, prospects, and converts prudently dictated—never neglecting their missionary character—The Church of England divides the country into parishes, very unequal in size and inhabitants, and restricts the pastor's labours to his particular parish.

XV. In the Apostolical Churches no minister was ordained more than once, and that qualified him for the highest ecclesiastical post, whether ordinary or peculiar to the inspired apostles—In the Church of England a person must be ordained three times before he can become a bishop.

XVI. In the Apostolical Churches congregations might be gathered, the gospel preached, and the sacraments administered, whenever and wherever convenient—In the Church of England, divine service can be performed only in prelatically consecrated buildings, and only during canonical hours.

XVII. In the Apostolical Churches, feasts, fasts, meats, and dress, were regarded as matters of indifference, and left to the judgment and choice of individuals—In the Church of England, all these are specified and fixed by law; and their strict observance is more insisted on, by many devout Conformists, than faith in Christ or holiness of life.

XVIII. The Apostolical Churches had no complicated rituals, nor humanly prescribed forms of service and prayer; but Christians worshipped with simplicity and freedom, and ministers prayed extempore as God assisted them—In the Church of England, a showy ceremonial and humanly devised petitions are imposed on all its adherents.

XIX. In the Apostolical Churches all persons, holding the head, believing the cardinal doctrines of the gospel, and leading godly lives—though differing on minor points, were received as Christian brethren—In the Church of England, an avowed non-compliance with but one unscriptural rite, exposes the holiest member and minister to a reprimand or excommunication.

XX. The Apostolical Churches used no sign of the cross, nor employed sponsors, nor pretended to regenerate souls in baptism—In the Church of England, no public dedication of a child can take place unless the sign be made, these sponsors employed, and this doctrine inculcated.

XXI. The Apostolical Churches never observed the rite of Prelatical Confirmation, to release sponsors from their broken vows, or to assure the young, indiscriminately, that they are regenerated and enjoy the favour of God—In the Church of England, this is gravely done about every third year.

XXII. The Apostolical Churches dedicated no days and instituted no services, to celebrate the deeds or deaths of any human being—The Church of England has set apart numerous days, and drawn up special services, to commemorate the doings and deaths of some of the worst men that ever existed.

XXIII. The Apostolical Churches administered the Lord's supper at a

table, to persons in the posture usually observed at ordinary meals—In the Church of England, the communicants are compelled to surround an altar, and, on their knees, to eat and drink the bread and wine, which “contain a “marvellous incorporation of the body and blood of Christ.”

XXIV. The Apostolical Churches were composed only of persons professedly sound in the faith and holy in their lives; others being excluded or expelled from membership—The Church of England receives alike, into full communion, all baptized adults, wise and ignorant, virtuous and immoral.

XXV. In the Apostolical Churches there was no bowing towards the east, nor *at* the name of “Jesus;” nor were varying postures observed while different portions of Scripture were read; nor the noisy responses of the people encouraged—In the Church of England all these absurd proceedings are regarded as marks of genuine conformity.

XXVI. In the Apostolical Churches, pastors claimed no exclusive prerogatives to educate, marry, baptize, and bury all the population; nor pretended to sanctify stone walls and grave yards; nor to regenerate all the young, pardon all the dying, and send all the dead to heaven—In the Church of England these pretensions are solemnly made by its priesthood.

XXVII. The Apostolical Churches knew nothing of Cathedral Institutions, with deans, prebendaries, canons, and the like, having large pay and little work—In the Church of England these are found in every diocese, and are regarded as integral parts and splendid ornaments of the state-religion.

XXVIII. In the Apostolical Churches clear and decided distinctions were made between the righteous and the wicked, the mere moralist and the real Christian—In the Church of England the same language of promise, comfort, and hope, is addressed to the profligate, as to the holiest in its communion.

XXIX. In the Apostolical Churches, no pastors were coercively imposed on Christian Churches, by patrons, lay or clerical—In the Church of England, ministers are forced upon congregations, like captains over a paid soldiery—the hearers having neither vote nor voice in the affair.

XXX. In the Apostolical Churches, no power of presentation to religious preferments was sold or given to a third party—In the Church of England this power is a regular marketable property—and the souls of men are, in effect, disposed of by private sale or public auction.

But enough has been said to prove that the difference between the Church of Christ, as plainly exhibited in the New Testament, and the Church of England, as seen in its creeds, canons, rituals, and workings, is great, glaring, and vitally important.

Voluntary and Congregational Churches are mercifully and honourably exempt from the charges here righteously brought against the state-system; which, moreover, does not embrace a single SCRIPTURAL rite, doctrine, or arrangement, not held and observed by the former—as I am fully prepared to maintain against the arguments and evidence of any reasonable antagonist.

With what consistency and modesty of face, then, can any Churchman call his denomination, “THE PURE APOSTOLICAL CHURCH OF CHRIST?” and with what propriety can intelligent and conscientious believers in the inspiration, authority, and sufficiency of Scripture, unite themselves to the “Church of England,” in preference to the Congregational, Evangelical, and Voluntary Churches of this country?

THE POPERY

OF THE

CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

By the Rev. W. THORN, Winchester.

EPISCOPALIANS frequently speak of the Romish Church as if they considered the Church of England perfectly free from the corruptions of Popery. We have often been surprised at their want of information or honesty. Our present object is to show that these hierarchies are very much alike.

By the Romish Church, we shall not here understand those Catholic societies which are supported by voluntary contributions, as in Ireland; but Popery, maintained by a coercive taxation, as in several continental nations; and by the Church of England, that denomination which is established by law in this country.

We cheerfully admit, that there are several points of difference between these churches, to the advantage of the English hierarchy—while it must be conceded that there are *inconsistencies* in the latter communion, which are not discovered in the Church of Rome.

It may be observed, that if there be one party in the Church of England more consistent than the rest, or which more correctly and honestly expounds the real views and character of the state-religion, it is evidently “The Oxford Puseyite Party,” in their “TRACTS FOR THE TIMES.”

In fact, the Law-Church is essentially Popish under a Protestant name; and the NEWMANITES are unjustly condemned by their conforming brethren for fairly and honestly expounding the Prayer-book, Canons, and Homilies of their own sect. In some cases the Tractists may have proceeded a little too far; but, upon the whole, as will presently appear, they are far more correct and consistent expositors of the doctrines and ceremonies of the state-religion than their reverend opponents. They candidly speak out what many others, equally in the secret, are afraid or ashamed publicly to avow.

It should be universally known, that in the year 1689, a committee, composed of ten bishops and twenty other pious and learned dignitaries of the Church of England, made 600 corrections in the Prayer-book, articles, and canons of the Establishment; but which were not adopted through the influence of certain bigoted parties in the British parliament.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, speaking of certain Catholic children in our national schools being compelled to attend the Church of England worship, stated that in this he saw no difficulty—“because if ever there had been any expressions in the Liturgy opposed to the Catholic faith, they had been expunged by the good sense of those who reviewed it in after times,”—subsequent to the reformation.—*Morn. Ch. July 6, 1839.*

"Of all Protestant churches, the national Church of England most nearly resembles the Church of Rome. It has retained much of the dogma and much of the discipline of Roman Catholics. Down to the subdeacon, it has retained the whole of their hierarchy; and like them has its deans, rural deans, chapters, prebends, archdeacons, rectors, and vicars; a Liturgy taken in a great measure from the Roman Catholic Liturgy, and composed, like that, of psalms, canticles, the three creeds, litanies, epistles, gospels, prayers, and responses. Both churches have the sacrament of baptism, and the eucharist, the absolution of the sick, the burial service, the sign of the cross in baptism, the reservation of confirmation, and order to bishops, the difference of episcopal and sacerdotal dress, feasts, fasts, &c."—*Butler's Life of Grotius.*

In drawing up the following parallels, our object is not to irritate the ministers or members of the establishment—many of whom we highly respect—but to expose those errors of their system which require amendment, and which many pious and intelligent Churchmen deplore in common with ourselves.

The subsequent remarks will show, that the Puritans had better grounds for their exertions to purify the Church than most Episcopalians are willing to admit—and that, if we would be rid of the corruptions of Popery, there must be a second Reformation of the Church of England greater than the first.

As no intelligent or candid person will question the truth of our representations, it will not be requisite to refer to proofs for their confirmation. A few prefatory observations, however, may not be unsuitable:—

1. That the Prayer Book contains little beside the Mass Book translated into English.
2. That the Pope offered to confirm it, if the Church of England would join that of Rome.
3. That Episcopalian clergymen of eminence have declared such a union of the two churches practicable.
4. That the supposed efficacy of Episcopal Ordination is derived entirely through the Popish Prelates.
5. That at the accession of Elizabeth, 9211 catholic priests, out of 9400, joined the church of England.
6. That the Papists and Protestants long worshipped together in the English church, till prevented by the Pope.
7. That at the Reformation, Parliament transferred the entire powers exercised by the Pope in this country to Henry VIII. and his successors.

I. Both Churches were constructed by fallible men, and established by national laws; which laws became the rule of conduct, and the object of ultimate appeal, both to the priests and the people. The New Testament is not the rule or law of Episcopalians or Catholics, as such.

II. Both have visible and human heads, who decree all rites and ceremonies, and exercise absolute authority in controversies of faith; demanding implicit obedience to their commands, whether agreeable to Jesus Christ or not.

III. Both are the prolific source of party and parliamentary strife—thereby destroying the peace and harmony of the nation—scandalizing the gospel of Christ—and causing the enemies of religion to triumph.

IV. Both are supported by coercive taxation—Tithes, Rates, Dues, and Parliamentary Grants. Nothing is left to the zeal, charity, or piety of the people. They can withhold nothing from the most unworthy Clergymen.

V. Both systems impose ministers on their congregations, and very frequently the most unsuitable and incompetent—depriving the people of their reasonable and Christian privilege of electing their own pastors.

VI. Both traffic in the souls of men.—Benefices, involving the cure of souls, are bought and sold in the market by auction, equally with chariots, horses, or any other property, and transferred to the highest bidder.

VII. Both have settled forms of prayer, unalterable liturgies, and articles of faith, of human composition, to which all parties must subscribe. Nothing is left to the skill, piety, or devotion of the Clergy. An ability to read is all that is essential to the priestly office.

VIII. Both have long grades of officers, with titles and powers unknown to the New Testament—Archbishops, Lord-bishops, Chancellors, Prebendaries, Canons, Deans, Rectors, Vicars, and others, almost without end.

IX. Both divide their territories into larger or smaller sections—as bishoprics, archdeaconries, deaneries, and parishes; and limit the labours of the Clergy to particular districts, however confined their space, or few their population.

X. Both make high pretences to supernatural powers. The Bishops pretend to confer the Holy Ghost on the persons they ordain; and all the clergy pretend to absolve men from all their sins upon a dying bed.

XI. Both consider baptism a real regeneration;* by this ceremony the subjects are made members of Christ, the children of God, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven. They alike employ sponsors, and use the sign of the cross.

XII. Both perform the ceremony of confirmation; in which the Bishop tells the young people (whatever be their moral character) that they were all regenerated by the Holy Ghost at their baptism, and assures them of the favour of God.

XIII. Both awfully pervert the sacrament of the Lord's Supper—Priests administer it at an altar to kneeling, and often ungodly, communicants—one Church calls it "*Transubstantiation*;" and the other, in the Homilies, a "*Marvellous Incorporation*."

XIV. Both display a most cruel and persecuting spirit—anathematizing or excommunicating (to the loss of character, property, and liberty) those who do not avowedly conform. [See first twelve Canons.] They have alike put thousands of Dissenters to death.

XV. Both are peculiarly sectarian, treating Nonconformists with contempt—confining their central, infant, and other schools, colleges, and charities to their own parties; and inculcating sectarianism with the utmost assiduity.

* See "The Antichristian and Pernicious Doctrines of the Church Catechism, &c." By the same Author, price Sixpence.

XVI. Both systems tend to make Ministers haughty, avaricious, and petulant—frequently produce strife between pastor and people—introduce idle and ungodly parsons—and protect their vices.

XVII. Both churches—with unalterable creeds and minutely defined rubrics, with vows and solemn asseverations—tolerate every wild notion and heresy in existence, and produce a body of religious hypocrites.

XVIII. Both are upheld by the secular arm, fear, ignorance, avarice, and corruption, by denouncing the loss of business, reputation, and even of salvation, on seceders; while profligates are seldom marked men.

XIX. Both treat all their conforming parishioners alike, whether good, bad, or indifferent. The same words are addressed to all—the same ceremonies performed by all: “there is no difference between the clean and the unclean.”

XX. Both have a great deal of pomp and ceremony in their worship—standing, sitting, kneeling, bowing, turning towards the altar, dresses, &c. all calculated to afford ignorant persons a deceitful ground of hope and confidence in their own “bodily exercises.”

XXI. Both attach extravagant and unchristian notions of sanctity to their places of worship, their clerical habits, titles, and ministerial performances; their character is indelibly sacred; their churches holy; their doings only efficacious.

XXII. Both prefer exclusive claims to ministerial efficiency, not from the piety, talents, and zeal of their preachers; but from the superstitious and unsupported notions of apostolical succession and prelatical ordination.

XXIII. Both read portions of the Apocrypha as a part, or in the place, of the Word of God. The Church of England omits the public reading of 211 chapters of the Bible, and substitutes 101 chapters of the Apocrypha.

XXIV. Both enjoin the religious observance of numerous holy days every year, in commemoration of some of the most profligate and tyrannical beings that ever existed. The English hierarchy has appointed (independent of sundays) ninety-five fasting days, and thirty-one days of feasting.

XXV. Both churches, by extreme unction, or the sacrament and the burial service, professedly send all their people to heaven; bless God for taking the most impenitent wretch to himself; and commit his body to the dust, in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life.

In a word, both systems are unscriptural, and have sadly failed to answer the end for which millions of money are annually expended, and for which the Son of God introduced his gospel into the world.

It is a question of some difficulty, Whether the Church of England be really and truly entitled to the appellation of Protestant? That it is the least reformed of all the Protestant Churches, is universally admitted.

Consequently, the sooner these hierarchies are reformed, and assimilated to the model of the earliest Churches, the better. Let every enlightened member of them put his shoulder to the wheel, without hesitation or fear.

THE SUPERSTITIOUS RITES AND NOTIONS OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

By the Rev. W. THORN, Winchester.

THE title of this tract will sufficiently indicate the nature of its contents, and the design of the writer in composing it. The members of the Parliamentary Church claim for themselves and their religion an amount of intelligence, refinement, simplicity, purity, and efficiency, vastly superior to any other protestant sect in the country. How far these pretensions are sustainable, will be apparent in the following exposition.

All the rites and notions exposed in this paper are manifestly unscriptural; and, like the tradition of the Jews, they are calculated to make void the word of God, and to constitute a false and fatal ground of hope in the minds of ignorant Conformists. The exposure of them is, therefore, a righteous duty, which every genuine disciple of Christ, and every sincere friend of his fellow creatures, is bound to perform.

I. When the creed or belief is read, the minister and people must turn their faces towards the east, like the ancient Persians, who worshipped the rising sun. This is beautifully done in our cathedrals!

II. All churches are to be built due east and west, and the tower placed at the west end. This position is of great public service, as it shows the people which way the wind blows!

III. The altar must be always placed at the east end of the church, before which all communicants must kneel, as if worshipping the elements; and towards which the priest must bow on leaving the church!

IV. Every person interred is to have his head placed due west, that when he rises from the dead, his face may be turned towards the east, in which quarter it seems Christ is to make his first appearance!

V. Two great wax candles should always stand on the altar, in honour of the sacramental bread and wine; which, after consecration, contains a "marvellous incorporation of the body and blood of Christ."

VI. When a priest ministers at the desk, altar, font, or grave, he must wear a white gown, to note the purity of his character, and because such is venerable for its antiquity—among Egyptian priests!

VII. If more wine be consecrated than the communicants drink, it must not be carried out of the church, but reverently swallowed by the priest and his friends on the spot—being a most holy beverage!

VIII. When a plot of ground is to be used as a burying place, it must be consecrated by the bishop—otherwise demons and evil spirits might molest the remains of the saints interred therein!

IX. Clergymen must be sure to bury their dead only in sanctified soil; and on no account suffer a dissenting minister to speak a word of exhortation to the people on such blessed and holy mould!

X. At the death of a person, it is necessary to toll the bell to summon to prayers, for the safe convoy of his soul to heaven. But if the friends cannot pay the ringers' fee, it does not much matter!

XI. When the minister comes to these words—"Earth to earth, ashes to ashes," &c. the sexton must always suit the action to the phraseology, by casting a little earth three times on the lid of the coffin!

XII. It is proper and pious to read the funeral service over the greatest baptized profligates; but it would be inappropriate and sinful to read it over an unbaptized baby—who must be buried like a dead dog!

XIII. If a male child is to be christened, it must have two godfathers and one godmother—and if a female, the reverse; or it cannot be made a genuine christian at the parish font!

XIV. No parent may stand sponsor to his own child; though *any one* else—having been confirmed and received the sacrament—may undertake the fearful and impracticable responsibility!

XV. The priest must make the sign of the cross on the baby's face, to teach it impressively not to be ashamed of the cross of Christ—and without this sign it could not be canonically christened!

XVI. It is very reasonable to ask the baby several theological questions at baptism; and if it cannot speak, by reason of its tender age, the sponsors shall declare its will, and vow in its name!

XVII. It being presumed that all unbaptized children are in danger of losing the joys of heaven; to prevent this dreadful evil, any old woman may administer this sacrament to dying infants!

XVIII. When young persons, however vicious and ignorant, are catechised, they must say that in baptism they were sanctified, and made members of Christ, children of God, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven!

XIX. It is proper to press upon adults the necessity of regeneration, (which is never repeated in the same person,) even though they were regenerated by the Holy Ghost at the parish baptistry!

XX. When the gospels are read, all the people are to stand up; and when the epistles are read, they are all to sit down, to show that they esteem St. Paul a great deal less than St. Matthew!

XXI. If the word "Jesus" occur fifty times during a service, the men must reverently bow their necks and the women their knees; but they must do neither at the words Lord, God, Jehovah, or Christ!

XXII. As "fine feathers make fine birds," it is essential to the honour and importance of the clergy, in cathedrals especially, that they be clothed in fine robes of different shapes, size, texture, and colours!

XXIII. As "he that drives fat oxen should himself be fat," it is necessary that some of our clergy should be titled and rich, that rich and titled laymen and ladies may profitably attend their genteel ministry!

XXIV. It is enjoined in the Canons, that all persons holding ecclesiastical livings, must usually wear gowns with standing collars, sleeves strait at the hands, tippets, and square caps!

XXV. But in their journeys they are to wear cloaks, with sleeves, welts,

long buttons or cuts; but never any coif or wrought nightcap, nor any light coloured stockings, in public!

XXVI. No clergyman may "cast out any devil or devils," except by authority of the bishop; lest, through inadvertency, he should get the worst of it, like the seven vagabond sons of old Sceva!

XXVII. No clergyman may officiate in a meeting-house, lest he should be defiled thereby; or, lest the pulpit, being imperfectly charged with divine influence, should draw too largely on his positive graces!

XXVIII. For a similar reason, no preacher, not immediately ordained by an Irish, English, or *Popish* prelate, must be allowed to minister, even as a deacon, in the Church of England!

XXIX. As lessons of *modesty* may be best taught by example, it is proper that bishops, deans, &c. should wear good silk aprons.—Cocked hats and wigs are also suitable tokens of great wisdom and gravity!

XXX. Pious clergymen are of little importance in the church, which teaches (Art. 26) that evil men, duly ordained, can as effectually preach the word and administer the sacraments as converted ministers!

XXXI. As god-parents are accountable for their wards till confirmed, it is necessary to have this apostolic rite (!) administered as early as convenient after the children can repeat the church catechism!

XXXII. In confirmation the bishop, in his wig and lawn sleeves, must assure the young people, indiscriminately, that they were all spiritually regenerated in baptism, and are now enjoying the favour of God!

XXXIII. As "charity hopeth all things," the priest is to make no invidious distinctions among his people; but must address the same language of hope, peace, and comfort, to all—good, bad, and indifferent!

XXXIV. It is assumed, that church people can derive no profit from public prayers which they do not know beforehand; but that they can and do receive great benefit from sermons they never heard before!

XXXV. Though a clergyman may be entrusted with the instruction of the people, by preaching his own sermons; he must not be entrusted with leading their devotions, by praying his own prayers!

XXXVI. It is contended that all marriages should be previously made public, to prevent unlawful connexions; but if people can purchase a license, they may be united, at any time, with the utmost secrecy!

XXXVII. When a man marries a woman, he must worship her with his body, wed her with a ring, and endow her with all his goods; though an hour after he might legally pawn her inmost attire!

XXXVIII. Every woman, as if the property of somebody, must be given away in marriage, even though a widow, her own mistress, without natural guardians, and having attained the venerable age of seventy!

XXXIX. The priest is to pray that the newly married pair may be divinely "assisted in the procreation of children;" unless, from the looks or age of the lady, the young official should fancy her "past child-bearing!"

XL. As it is best for a man to rise to dignity and influence by degrees,

a parson must be ordained first a deacon, secondly a priest, and thirdly a bishop; with corresponding power, apparel, and wealth!

XLII. It is right to dedicate a great number of days to Romish saints, as it shows a good deal of charity towards a church which the homilies denounce as "a foul, filthy, old withered harlot!"

XLIII. It is proper to dedicate buildings, erected for the worship of God, to particular Romish saints, as St. Swithin, St. Maurice, St. Lawrence; or to retain such venerable designations to places formerly erected!

XLIV. In Lent, people should fast forty days, eating no beef, mutton, poultry, or pork, and living on fish, eggs, butter, &c. because Moses, Elijah, and Christ, ate *nothing* during 40 days in the wilderness!

XLV. People should be particularly religious during Lent, attending church half a dozen times a week; and, by all means be serious and receive the sacrament on Easter and Christmas days and Good Friday!

XLVI. As many parts of the Apocrypha are better than many parts of the Bible, it is proper to omit reading 187 chapters of Scripture, and to substitute for them 104 chapters of the Apocrypha!

XLVII. As one can hardly have too much of a good thing, it is proper to repeat the same prayers every week, the Lord's Prayer four or five times every service, and the doxology much oftener!

XLVIII. To secure religious unanimity, the clergy must all subscribe the same creeds and canons; but it is not essential to their holding office that they should interpret them in the same sense!

XLIX. Though the Homilies aver that "piping, singing, chanting, and playing upon the organs, sorely displease God, and filthily defile his holy house"—it is proper, if possible, to have them in every church!

L. To keep up their dignity, the clergy must plead their unbroken descent from the Pope and St. Peter—and pretend to regenerate children, pardon the dying—and confer the Holy Ghost on each other!

L. While government positively nominates every bishop, the cathedral chapter must gravely and piously go through the form and farce of electing him—as if the choice really rested with themselves!

LI. All cases of wills, divorce, adultery, clerical delinquency, &c. must be tried in SPIRITUAL courts, where LAYMEN alone preside as judges, often passing sentence on spiritual culprits!

LII. Though the sufficiency and supreme authority of the scriptures are often admitted; yet the church sets forth the canons, articles, &c. to try the Bible, and all other supposed ecclesiastical transgressors!

LIII. The Articles of the church (6, 20, 21,) declare that the belief of non-scriptural doctrines is unnecessary to salvation; yet you must believe, at least, 50 of them, or cease to be an honest churchman!

LIV. Though the scriptures are admitted to be our sole directory in sacred matters; yet the clergy often send men to jail, and threaten them with hell-fire, for adhering pertinaciously to God's blessed word.

LV. Though the clergy boast that their church is built on a rock, and needs fear neither radicalism nor dissent: they are frequently exclaiming 'the church is in danger,' and is coming to destruction!

LVI. Clergymen must be appointed to parishes by patrons (perhaps Catholics, Socinians, or Jews)—as custom-house officers are appointed by government to prevent frauds on the revenue!

LVII. When parsons are thus imposed, *they must have the sole care of ALL THE SOULS—THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF ALL THE YOUNG—THE TITHE OF ALL THE PRODUCE OF THEIR DISTRICTS—AND ALL BY DIVINE RIGHT!!!*

THE GLARING INCONSISTENCIES OF "EVANGELICAL" CLERGYMEN.

By the Rev. W. THORN, Winchester.

In this tract the writer limits his remarks to EVANGELICAL CLERGYMEN for the ensuing reasons: They are supposed to be converted and conscientious men, to think soberly and devoutly on religious subjects, to believe in the perfection and sufficiency of the word of God, and to hold that every individual is responsible to the Almighty for his belief and conduct. They are also, strange to say, the greatest sticklers for the admitted corruptions of the church, and the busiest, if not the bitterest, enemies to Dissenters of all the clerical brotherhood.

He is free to admit that all Evangelical Clergymen are not equally inconsistent, as all are not equally enlightened by the truth of revelation; nor do all advance equally beyond their official boundaries to manifest their sectarian dispositions. The exceptions, however, are unhappily few, and may be easily recognized by those who watch their movements; and who will carefully mark them in making an application of the subsequent charges against this sect of spiritual functionaries.

(1.) Many Evangelical Clergymen cannot conscientiously unite with pious Dissenters, even in circulating the authorised version of the word of God; but they can co-operate with ungodly churchmen in religious affairs.

(2.) Others are so pious that they can join no religious society, whose public meetings are not opened with prayer; but they can belong to clubs and institutions, in whose meetings the voice of prayer is unheard.

(3.) Few of them could conscientiously enter a dissenting chapel to attend a tract or temperance meeting; but they can conscientiously enter public houses, and take part in parish feasts and political discussions.

(4.) They deem it presumptuous in dissenting ministers to wear gowns in the pulpit, or to be entitled reverend; but they do not complain that ungodly clergymen, even Arians, Socinians, &c. enjoy such distinctions.

(5.) They brand Dissenters as mere worldly politicians, for taking part in political affairs; but they can regularly do the like without fancying themselves acting contrary to their religious vocations.

(6.) They condemn Nonconformists—who are all legal members of the church—for meddling with the state-religion; but they can fiercely assail dissenting societies—with which they have no legal connexion.

(7.) They could not contribute even pence to promote the cause of God among Dissenters; but they can piously compel Dissenters to contribute pounds towards the repudiated church of the Episcopalians.

(8.) They could not think of being on terms of social intercourse with holy Dissenters; but they can be most intimate with immoral and infidel clergymen and lay members of their own denomination.

(9.) They cannot consistently allow poor Dissenters to partake of public and parochial charities; but they can comfortably distribute them among the most ungodly people, who carefully avoid the meeting-house.

(10.) They cannot conscientiously recognize Dissenters as Christian brethren when alive; but they can conscientiously designate them dear brothers and sisters in Christ, when consigning them to the grave.

(11.) They denounce unconsecrated chapels, as unhallowed conventicles; but they can have their own little unconsecrated places of meeting for prayer and exhortation, without perceiving any irregularity in it.

(12.) They utter the severest speeches against extempore supplication, in a meeting house; but in their social prayer meetings, families, and sick rooms, they can most piously follow the reprobated practice.

(13.) They are quite disgusted with the loud responses and amens of the methodist chapel; but they can comfortably put up with the still greater buzz and clamorous responses of their own congregations.

(14.) Nothing is too bad to say of the Wesleyans, when preaching Christ in benighted villages; but when their votes are needed to support tory candidates, no people in the country are purer or brighter Christians.

(15.) While fully convinced that Evangelical Dissenters have no more religious connexion with Arians, Socinians, and Infidels, than themselves, yet, to serve some sectarian purpose, they often class them as one fraternity.

(16.) They frequently execrate their *present* Roman Catholic *fellow-subjects*; yet they as often laud to the heavens the tory papists of the Continent, and their own Catholic ancestors, whose charities they enjoy.

(17.) They bitterly declaim against the dogmas of popery; yet they can subscribe and promulgate, more than any other reformed church on earth, the distinguishing tenets and rites of the papists.

(18.) Their charity and delicacy are highly offended at the strong and homely expressions occasionally used by uneducated methodists; but they can coolly utter the more violent and vulgar language of their own services.

(19.) In public worship they declare all our reigning monarchs to be most religious and gracious princes; while, out of school, they deplore their impiety, and deprecate their doings, as adverse to the cause of Christ.

(20.) They disbelieve, and frequently preach against, the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, as a dreadful heresy; yet every time they baptize a child, they declare it to be then and there regenerated by the Holy Ghost.

(21.) They are fully convinced that Godfathers and Godmothers can never fulfil the vows and promises made at baptism; yet they never publicly baptize a child unless such vows and promises are expressly made.

(22.) They will not permit the most pious and competent parents to stand sponsors to their own children; yet they often allow young, gay, and thoughtless people to fill that unscriptural and impracticable office.

(23.) They avow their abhorrence of lying, especially on religious subjects; but whenever they teach, or cause to be taught, the Church Catechism, they knowingly make the children utter six or seven distinct falsehoods.

(24.) While assured that the Catechism, &c. are to be understood in their plain grammatical sense, they knowingly employ sophistical arguments to pervert their meaning and make them bearable by the people.

(25.) They entertain no hope of the salvation of many persons they inter; yet, when standing at their graves, they solemnly thank God for having taken all their precious souls to himself.

(26.) They do not believe that any man now alive can really confer the Holy Ghost on another; yet they subscribe a service which teaches that every lord bishop does this when ordaining a young clergyman.

(27.) They know that no person now on earth has power to forgive sin; yet they pretend to do this whenever they read, as in duty bound, the Visitation Service to a sick person in the prospect of death.

(28.) They cannot conscientiously allow public money to be voted for teaching catholic children out of the Douay version of the Bible; but they can solicit it for teaching children their own soul-destroying catechism.

(29.) They cannot permit young people to be confirmed unless they engage to avoid balls, fairs, theatres, and card parties; but they can admit adult frequenters of such amusements to receive the Lord's Supper.

(30.) While conscious that their catechetical, baptismal, confirmation, and other services, contain much that is injurious; they urge all persons to attend them, as if they were perfectly pure and necessary to salvation.

(31.) They boast of belonging to a truly apostolical church; yet they frequently admit that they officially do and teach many things not taught in the Bible, nor sanctioned by the practice of apostolical churches.

(32.) They condemn the catholics for adopting the superstitious and unscriptural traditions of the dark ages; yet they gravely adopt and inculcate similar traditions, and nearly to the same extent.

(33.) They are so jealous for the honour of religion that they cannot conscientiously overlook the least error in nonconformists; but they can quietly, if not complacently, pass over the heresies and vices of wealthy conformists.

(34.) They manifest the most tender and scrupulous consciences in matters not involving their official duties and personal interests; but respecting these they really appear to possess no conscience at all.

(35.) They affect to pity dissenting ministers, as being at the mercy of their congregations; yet they can tamely submit to be bound hand and foot by clerical superiors, popish canons, and acts of parliament.

(36.) While stoutly arguing against the voluntary system adopted by Dissenters, they openly embrace and enforce a similar principle among their own people, whenever they can seize a fair opportunity.

(37.) On fitting occasions, they preach up the blessings of brotherly love among all professors of the gospel; yet they are generally too bigoted to employ dissenting mechanics, or to deal with dissenting tradesmen.

(38.) They reprobate, in severe terms, a worldly and grasping disposition; yet they frequently evince the same spirit about their fees, tithes, and dues; and not seldom in their dealings with men of business.

(39.) They believe that laymen should be paid only in proportion to the equitable value of their goods and labour; but they can conscientiously receive ten times more public money than their own services merit.

(40.) Though conscious that prelatical ordination really conveys no more gifts, grace, or godliness, than that of a presbytery; yet they solemnly plead the former, as raising them far above the level of dissenting pastors.

(41.) Though aware that the New Testament recognizes only free-will offerings for supporting the cause of Christ; yet they can conscientiously extort their clerical incomes by the force of secular enactments.

(42.) Though loudly averring that Christ alone is the head and legislator of his church; they can submit to and defend the absolute domination of erring mortals in the affairs of his spiritual kingdom.

(43.) While convinced that most dissenting ministers are, at least, as successful as themselves in preaching the gospel; they often traduce them as incompetent, unauthorised, and obtrusive meddlers with religion.

(44.) While occasionally deploring their own want of success in converting their unholy parishioners; they piously exert all their influence to prevent others, more competent for the work, from doing it for them.

(45.) While stigmatizing dissenting pastors as a less learned body than the clergy; they employ their utmost efforts to prevent their entering those national schools of literature, which should be equally open to all.

(46.) While blaming the least popular excitement in dissenting chapels, as evidence that dissent is riotous; they can view the most disgraceful conflicts in churches, without fancying that episcopacy is equally quarrelsome.

(47.) Though boasting that nearly all the wealth in the nation belongs to their own sect; they can piously compel Dissenters to contribute towards washing their surplices and supplying their sacramental elements.

(48.) Though frequently preaching up justice and equity, they can appropriate to their own private use property which fairly belongs to the poor, and with which their churches should be kept in repair.

(49.) Though aware that there exists chapel-room for several millions of people; they beg money for building churches on the bare-faced assumption that there is neither a meeting-house nor a Dissenter in the country.

(50.) While condemning Dissenters as heretics and schismatics for not fully conforming to the church; they can neglect many of their own clerical duties without fancying that, so far, they are heretics and schismatics themselves.

(51.) Though all the laws and canons of the church are equally valid and binding; yet they observe and enforce those only that tend to oppress the people, or benefit themselves—regarding the rest as obsolete.

(52.) They have subscribed a canon (28) which makes it unlawful for any inhabitant of one parish to receive the Lord's supper in the church of another; and yet this solemn obligation is frequently violated.

(53.) They have also subscribed a canon (36) which declares that no person should be allowed to "catechise" the young, unless first duly licensed by the bishop. The violation of this law is likewise connived at.

(54.) Though they occasionally admit that there are many grievous errors in the church, viewed in detail; yet they defend the aggregate system, as though it were without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.

(55.) While believing they ought to make any sacrifices rather than encourage doctrines and doings contrary to scripture; yet, on the plea of utility, they constantly do what their consciences condemn.

56. They profess always to act honestly and openly towards Dissenters; yet they are frequently found practising mean, underhand measures, (misleading, cajoling, bribing, and intimidating the poor,) to rob Dissenting schools and congregations.

THE INDECENCY OF THE MARRIAGE SERVICE OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

By the REV. W. THORN, Winchester.

“The very first address of the officiating Minister IS MOST DISGUSTING to the ear of
“the persons to be married, as well as to their friends and neighbours by whom they
“are attended; and if to her own members it be offensive, how must it apply to those
“who are of a different communion?”

“OBSERVATIONS ON THE SERVICES AND FORMS OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.”
“By a Member of the Church of England.” Page 25.

AFTER long, strenuous, and expensive efforts, made by enlightened Dissenters and liberal Conformists, an Act of Parliament was recently passed, empowering Dissenting Ministers to marry persons in Dissenting Chapels, duly certified for that purpose.

Against this measure great, though ineffectual, opposition was offered by many of the state Clergy and their obsequious partizans. And still means are constantly used by them to render this equitable law as inoperative as possible—and great, indeed, is their exultation at the partial success attending their sinister and sectarian endeavours!

To the silly arguments which these persons employ to effect their object, it would be superfluous to offer any serious refutation. Instead of doing this, I beg to direct the reader's attention to the following facts:

(1.) It is not, and it cannot, be denied that marriages contracted in Dissenting Chapels are as valid, in the sight of God, and in the eye of the law, as those effected in the Parish Church.

(2.) It is not denied, even by our greatest ecclesiastical enemies, that the marriage service of the Chapel is conducted as respectably, and, at any rate, with as much decorum and religious propriety, as that observed in the state sanctuary.

(3.) Nor will any intelligent person, professing liberal and Christian principles, contend that Dissenting Ministers are not as fully qualified, and as righteously entitled, to perform this ceremony, as any of the Endowed Priesthood.

Admitting, as all enlightened and candid persons will, the truth of these declarations, it may be safely contended that, whatever prejudiced Churchmen may advance, no *valid* or *valuable* argument can be adduced by them against Dissenting marriages.

As to the AIMS and ANIMUS of these clerical objectors, no person will be at a loss to account for them. They evidently manifest, *FIRST, an ardent desire to monopolize all the wedding fees of the country; and, SECONDLY, a mortal dislike to witness Nonconforming Ministers placed, in any respect, on an official equality with the clerical officers of the Parliamentary Church.*

Under such unmerited provocations, Dissenters are imperatively called

upon to justify their past endeavours to enjoy the right of being married by their own pastors in their own places of worship. And this can be done in no way more simply and effectually, than by stating their objections to the marriage service of the Church of England.

For instance, the man is compelled to say, "*With this ring I thee wed,*" which is sheer nonsense—he no more marries her with his ring than he does with his nose—" *With my body I thee worship,*" which, without the soul, is pure hypocrisy, and with it, according to the present usual sense of the word, is gross idolatry—" *And with all my worldly goods I thee endow,*" which, without a formal marriage settlement, is a falsehood; for an hour after the wedding he might legally sell the clothes on her back, while she could not lawfully dispose of even his old hat, without his tacit or actual consent. And all this must be averred "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost!!"

But, as an exposition of all the exceptions that might be made to the old established service, would occupy more space than can be allotted to them in this concise publication; I shall, for the present, pass over certain impieties and absurdities of this rite, and confine my further remarks to one specific subject, namely—

THE INDECENCY OF THE MARRIAGE SERVICE.

But, before I come to this particular topic, some apology may be due, at least, to the female reader, for citing the subsequent obnoxious passages of the episcopal service. I beg to remark, then, that (while truly anxious to offend no modest mind) without transferring them to this paper, I should be unable to produce that conviction of their impropriety which it is my object to effect. Besides, this tract is not (like the marriage service) to be publicly addressed to young people before their youthful companions—it being solely designed for private perusal.

At all events, those unmarried persons, who may consider the citation of the following passages offensive to their delicacy, will, as a matter of course, decidedly and ever object to having them addressed to themselves at the altar. And the Clergyman who, in order to traduce the writer, may protest against these quotations, as calculated to injure delicate minds, will surely take care never again to read them to the young in the house of God.

Among many other objectionable passages which the priest is commanded to deliver, while performing the ceremony of marriage—and none of which can he omit, but at the risk of imperfectly uniting the young couple, and at the peril of his clerical rank and robes—are the following:—

FIRST—"WHICH HOLY ESTATE IS NOT TO BE ENTERPRISED, NOR TAKEN IN HAND UNADVISEDLY, LIGHTLY, OR WANTONLY, TO SATISFY MEN'S CARNAL APPE-TITE, LIKE BRUTE BEASTS... BUT, FIRST, IT WAS ORDAINED FOR THE PROCREA-TION OF CHILDREN... AND, SECONDLY, FOR A REMEDY AGAINST SIN, AND TO AVOID FORNICATION, THAT SUCH PERSONS, AS HAVE NOT THE GIFT OF CONTI-NENCY, MIGHT MARRY."

As the afore-cited "Member of the Church of England" justly observes, this address "*is most disgusting.*" If it have any intelligible meaning, and any legitimate design, they are the subsequent:—

(1.) It insinuates that the young persons present, (occasionally the most chaste, elevated and refined females in the kingdom) may, possibly, be entering into the married state "wantonly and to satisfy their carnal appetites, like brute beasts!!"—The expository and warning spirit of the passage evidently conveys this impression, and without it the language is totally unmeaning.

(2.) It unquestionably implies (notwithstanding previous commendations of the connubial state) that, if morally and physically possible, it would be better for all the young persons who attend the church to be married, to remain in the unnatural state of celibacy!! Those who have NOT the gift of continency MAY get married—therefore, those who do possess it, ought to keep single!!—And,

(3.) It broadly intimates that because the said young persons have not the gift of continency, they are now about to be joined in holy wedlock, as "a remedy against sin, and to avoid fornication," which might otherwise be committed by them!!

SECONDLY—The blushing bride is made to promise and vow, in the most sacred and solemn manner, that—

"SHE WILL FORSAKE ALL OTHER MEN, AND KEEP ONLY TO HER HUSBAND."

(1.) Now, this language assumes that she is at present improperly connected with other men; for otherwise she could not, and need not, forsake them!!—And,

(2.) It expresses a suspicion of her future virtue and fidelity; or else why compel her publicly to promise and vow to be always faithful to her own husband!!

FINALLY—The minister is enjoined to offer up the ensuing prayer:

"WE BESEECH THEE ASSIST WITH THY BLESSING THESE TWO PERSONS, THAT THEY MAY BOTH BE FRUITFUL IN PROCREATION OF CHILDREN."

Passing over the indecency of this marriage petition, let us notice the curious case of casuistry which it involves. The priest, and he, probably a young bachelor, fresh in holy orders, is directed to omit this prayer "*when the woman is past child-bearing!!*"

Observe, it is left to this young man to decide, either from the appearance or the admitted age of the lady, whether she is likely or not to bless her lord with little ones! But as looks and years (up to a certain amount) are deceptive, how is he to decide? If, in doubtful cases, he significantly omit to read it, the bride must feel herself insulted, by being set down as an old woman! And, if to flatter the lady's looks and vanity, he pronounce it to a somewhat venerable dame (a case of no very rare occurrence,) it must appear, to every spectator, laughable and absurd in the last degree!!

On the indecent character of the preceding quotations from the episcopal marriage service, it is needless to offer any lengthened observations. To read them attentively, is enough to convince every delicate person that they are highly exceptionable, and grossly insulting to the young candidates for matrimonial happiness.

As amply confirming these assertions, it is stated, on good authority, that some of the clergy, (evidently ashamed of the wedding service of their own pure apostolical church,) occasionally venture to skip certain INDELICATE parts of it, when marrying particular friends and acquaintances!! But which omissions, no female can fairly anticipate.

To comprehend the full force and offensiveness of the foregoing cautions, questions, and allusions; it is necessary particularly to notice the time and

occasion of uttering them. It is at a wedding, when the principal parties present must feel themselves in a most novel, trying, and delicate situation. These passages, moreover, are not simply read before them (as a chapter is read before a congregation, and when no one feels himself exclusively pointed at;) but they are spoken EXPRESSLY OF, OR DIRECTLY TO, the young modest bride and her, perhaps, equally bashful husband; and that too in the hearing, it may be, of a hundred other persons, young and old, collected to quizz the couple, and be amused at the ceremony!!

At the time of the Reformation, the language of the marriage service might have been accordant with the vulgar notions of the people, and even of the court itself; but now let the clergy define and defend it as they may, it "*is most disgusting*," and admits of no honest apology nor the smallest palliation. It must either be adapted to modern refinement, or be totally abandoned by all decent individuals.—Enough, however, has been said—

(1.) To prove that Protestant Dissenters were fully justified in seeking to be freed from the necessity of conforming to the marriage service of the Church of England.

(2.) To prevent all sensible Dissenters, of the present day, from attending the Parish Church, in order to be united in the holy bands of matrimony.

(3.) To induce all MODEST members of the Endowed Church to be married only in Dissenting Chapels, where they can be as cheaply and legally united as in the parish sanctuary.

(4.) And to convict the Church of England of being infinitely more indecent in its language and allusions than any Protestant Dissenting Church in the kingdom.

Before the passing of the late Act, people were obliged to be married by this INDECENT service of the church of England, or not at all. Painful alternative! But that necessity now, happily, no longer exists; and all delicate persons should avail themselves of the privileges which the laws of the land afford them; and as they become enlightened on the subject, and refined in their feelings, they most assuredly will.

Of the effect of this exposition upon UNINFORMED, COARSE, OR LOW-MINDED females, who may see nothing vulgar, incongenial, or objectionable in the Church ceremony, I can prognosticate little. But I believe that ALL refined, modest, and religious women, whether attached to the Establishment or not, after reading this paper, will unhesitatingly resolve never to be married in the Church of England, but only in a Dissenting Chapel; where the *disgusting* and filthy language and allusions of the episcopal service will be exchanged for expressions every way chaste, pious, and suitable to such an interesting occasion.

In conclusion, I beg to remark that were the Marriage Service of the State Church free from every possible objection; all *Dissenters*, now entering into holy wedlock, are bound by honour and consistency to be married in Dissenting Chapels. No language is too strong to express my sense of the impropriety and *meanness* manifested, in their applying to the parish priesthood to do that for them which their own pastors are perfectly qualified and disposed to perform—in many cases gratuitously, and in all as cheaply as the national clergy.

DISSENT NOT SINFUL:

AND JUSTIFIED

BY THE EXAMPLE OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

A LETTER TO THE REV. T. STEVENSON,

[LATE] RECTOR OF ST. PETER CHEESEHILL, WINCHESTER.

By the Rev. W. THORN, Winchester.

REV. SIR,

FROM your reply of the 11th ult. I perceive you still adhere to the opinion you recently pronounced to one of my young people, that "IT IS A GREAT SIN TO DISSENT FROM THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND." And you further indirectly, but distinctly, avow your determination to promulgate this doctrine, "AS NEED SHALL REQUIRE AND OCCASION SHALL BE GIVEN."

As you politely decline "any further communication upon this subject," and refuse to assign your reasons for holding and diffusing such a sentiment among your nonconforming parishioners, and as this practice is very prevalent, especially among evangelical clergymen, I have no alternative left but to prove, through the press, that this notion is altogether void of any solid foundation.

I, therefore, purpose, in this letter, to show that "IT IS NOT SINFUL TO DISSENT FROM THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND"—unless your own denomination be guilty for dissenting from the Church of Rome. And I shall leave it with you either to withdraw your charge against us, or to admit yourselves to be equally criminal.

When you declare it to be a great sin to dissent, you fail to state whether you regard it equally sinful to forsake your party for a Congregational, a Baptist, or a Wesleyan communion, as for a Socinian, Arian, or Swedenborgian persuasion. I can hardly believe that such is your real opinion. Yet a simple and confiding auditor might naturally infer from your language, that dissent was alike wicked under every circumstance. In your future attempts to proselyte my people, I hope you will be a little more explicit on this point.

In support of my proposition, I shall state all the arguments you were likely to adduce to show that dissent is iniquitous; and I shall prove that they are either totally invalid, or alike involve your own persuasion in the guilt of heresy and schism—you not having stronger reasons for dissenting from popery than we have for leaving your national establishment.

I. You cannot consider it sinful *to be in a state of nonconformity* to other religious communions—since all Protestant Episcopalians are in this condition as much so as any dissenting sect. In spirit and practice there are few churches so completely separate and sectarian as your own.

II. You cannot consider it sinful to dissent from a national religion *in every case*; for your own church dissented from that of Rome some three hundred years ago.—For call it restoration, reformation, purification, or what you please, your dissenting is as real and genuine as my own, or as that of the Puritans during the Commonwealth.

III. Nonconformity is not necessarily sinful because its adherents may be *limited in number*—otherwise your church must be exceedingly criminal;

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seeing the Greek, Romish, and Presbyterian persuasions are, separately, five times larger than yours.—Indeed, there are many more Independents, Baptists, or Wesleyans, in Christendom than Church-of-Englanders.

IV. Nor will you aver that *the brief existence* of a religious body must stamp it with the seal of condemnation; for your own communion, compared with the Greek and Romish churches, is but of yesterday—even the Independent and Baptist societies of Britain can plead an age nearly as great as your misnamed Protestant Episcopacy.

V. You cannot regard it as sinful to leave a church because it happens to be *Episcopalian*—for you left and upset a church purely of this order—as is the Greek church, Wesleyanism in America, Moravianism, and nearly every system of heathen superstition.

VI. You will not pronounce it a sin to dissent from your church because the *king, queen, and court*, may be of its communion; for then it would be a sin to appertain to a Protestant society in France or Spain, whose political heads are Roman Catholics.

VII. Neither can you deem it sinful to dissent from a church established and endowed by *royal edicts and acts of parliament*; unless you are prepared to admit that Episcopalians in Scotland, and Protestants in Portugal, are sinning by their dissent.

VIII. To forsake *the national clergy*, and to attend the ministry of a non-conforming preacher, cannot be abstractedly regarded as criminal; except it would be a sin in China to hear a Christian missionary, or in Italy to hear a reformed pastor.

IX. To quit *the parish church* and to worship in a meeting-house is certainly no more sinful than for Protestant converts from popery in Austria to leave the state sanctuaries, and to attend Episcopalian conventicles, licenced or not by imperial laws.

X. To leave *one Protestant party for another* cannot be regarded as a sin; unless you deem it iniquitous in Nonconformists, by birth and education, to dissent to your church; or for Scottish Presbyterians to turn English Episcopalians.

XI. To *proselyte conforming children and adults* to a Dissenting persuasion may not be wicked; for your Church-of-England brethren, in catholic and heathen countries, are paid and applauded for attempting and effecting a similar object.

XII. To dissent *from a hierarchy*, with its arch and lord-bishops, its chancellors, deans, archdeacons, prebendaries, &c. &c. may not be displeasing to God; for this is done by pious Protestants in Catholic countries, and was also done by the reformers in our own.

XIII. It may not be sinful to dissent from a church *with a humanly prescribed faith*, forms, feasts, fasts, prayers, dresses, and ceremonies; for this must be the case with all Protestants in Spain, and was so with the founders of your own sect.

XIV. Supposing that all your clergy, good and bad, were *true successors* of the holy and inspired apostles, even then we might dissent without sin;

unless you consider it sinful to dissent at Rome, where the priests are equally genuine successors with yourselves.

XV. To dissent from a church whose parsons are *prelatically ordained*, involves us in no more guilt than is incurred by all Protestants in France, and by the founders of your church, for dissenting from the prelatically consecrated priests of Rome.

XVI. It will not be regarded as sinful to dissent from your church because it contains, among others, *many learned, pious, and useful ministers* of the gospel; otherwise the Episcopalians in Scotland must be incurring great guilt by their nonconformity to the kirk.

XVII. As you dissented from a church supported by *coercively collected tithes*, dues, fees, and rates; and as your Protestant brethren in some continental countries do the like; you will not charge us with guilt for following so worthy an example.

XVIII. As you and your brethren, at home and abroad, dissent from a church whose ministers *pretend to give each other the Holy Ghost*—to regenerate the young—to pardon the dying, &c. you will not accuse us of sin for dissenting from your church which makes the like pretensions.

XIX. As the party which you and all Protestants in Spain, Italy, &c. have forsaken, *has its consecrated churches*, &c. it will not be deemed criminal in us to leave your denomination because certain bishops, Popish or Protestant, have sanctified your places of worship.

XX. As you left a church whose canons, creeds, laws, and occasional services, *condemn and anathematize* every Protestant as a heretic; you cannot think it necessarily wicked in us to leave your church, which breathes equal vengeance on all Nonconformists.

XXI. As your clergy preach every known *doctrine* and *heresy* broached among the numerous sects of Dissenters; you will not pronounce our nonconformity to be sinful on the supposition that your party preserves the unity of the faith in its pristine perfection.

I have now adduced all the arguments you were likely to advance, to prove that “It is a great sin to dissent from the Church of England”—and I have shown concisely, yet I hope distinctly, that they either convict us of no crime, or recoil with equal force on your own party.

That dissent involves us in no *political* offence is certain; for our chapels are certified and sanctioned by the state; and our ministers are as fully authorized to preach, pray, visit the sick, marry adults, baptize the young, and inter the dead, as yourself, or the first ecclesiastical dignitary in the land. In our worship we are as fully protected by the civil power as Episcopalians.

To prove that dissent in this country is really and universally a great sin, you must demonstrate not only that dissent has its faults and evils; but that your church has none—not only that some bodies of Dissenters are heterodox, but that all are so; and that, weighed in the balances against your unspotted system, they are altogether found wanting.—Nothing less than this will fairly support your accusations against dissent.

Deferring a more direct and explicit justification of dissent till my next letter; I take leave to remark, that as you do not feel yourself answerable for all the errors and heresies emanating from church parsons (even though constituting one body with but one subscribed faith,) so, I do not feel called upon to justify the grounds on which any sects, besides my own, dissent from your church, nor to vindicate their creeds, services, and conduct in defence of my own secession. They can, doubtless, do this to their own satisfaction, and most likely beyond your refutation.

As a minister, then, of the Congregational denomination, I contend that to dissent from your church to mine is not sinful in the sight of God. You declare that it is. *I therefore challenge you to the proof.* And to place the matters at issue between us in the most favourable light for exciting your scrutiny and polemical abilities, I shall venture the following prepositions:—

(1.) I challenge you to prove that our Congregational societies maintain a single error in constitution, doctrine, or precept, or observe a single unscriptural rite, rule, or ceremony, which is not found in your own, either in kind or degree. If you fail in convicting us on this head, then I shall contend that to dissent from the State-church to Independency cannot be sinful on account of *our greater imperfections.*

(2.) I challenge you to prove that your church holds one New Testament doctrine, enforces one apostolical precept, or observes one divinely constituted Christian ordinance, which is not equally received, professed, and maintained, by our Congregational churches. If you fail here likewise, then it will be manifest that to dissent from your church cannot be sinful on account of *your superior compliance with God's word.*

(3.) I challenge you to prove that the Congregational Churches at all violate the genius, order, constitution, or example of the apostolical churches in their sentiments, worship, terms of fellowship, sources of support, or any other leading and distinguishing properties. If you fail here also, then I shall contend, that to dissent from your church to ours, *must be, at least, a sinless act in any Episcopalian.*

(4.) Lastly, I challenge you to prove that your church does not hold practice, and promote, many antichristian laws, rites, notions, orders, forms, ceremonies, and institutions, of a most pernicious, *God-dishonouring, and soul-destroying* tendency. And if you fail here too, as you unquestionably will, then I shall contend that to dissent from your church to ours, so far from being a great sin against God, *must be a great VIRTUE, and highly acceptable to our divine Lord and Master.*

I have now stated more than sufficient to prove that you have brought a grave accusation against us which you are unable to substantiate. This, I think, the intelligent and christian reader will believe, at least, till you shall have openly and clearly evinced a fallacy in my arguments, sufficient to destroy the entire force of my defence. While this is undone, I shall contend that IT IS NOT A GREAT SIN TO DISSENT FROM THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

I remain, yours, &c.

WILLIAM THORN.

THE SIN AND DANGER OF CONFORMITY TO THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

A SECOND LETTER TO THE [LATE] REV. T. STEVENSON,

Rector of St. Peter Cheesehill, Winchester.

By the Rev. W. THORN, Winchester.

REV. SIR,

IN my last letter it was, I presume, clearly proved, that your charge against us, of COMMITTING A GREAT SIN BY DISSENTING FROM THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND, is destitute of any satisfactory proof: at least, I shall remain of this opinion till you shall have demonstrated the inconclusiveness or inapplicability of my reasonings.

But to strengthen the preceding evidence, and to place my positions beyond the reach of any successful attack by yourself or your reverend brethren, I shall make you defendant instead of plaintiff in this affair—and prove that it is A GREAT SIN TO CONFORM TO THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND, and that you cannot remain within its pale without grievously sinning against God.

In pursuing this object, I shall adopt your own recognized ground of argument—THE EXCLUSIVE AND ABSOLUTE AUTHORITY OF GOD'S WORD IN ALL RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS, AND THE SINFULNESS OF FOSTERING SENTIMENTS AND FOLLOWING PRACTICES CONTRARY TO ITS MANIFEST INTENTIONS. On this avowed, valid, and excellent principle you erroneously accuse us of sin; and under its direction, I shall be enabled clearly and fully to establish my charge against you.

As you believe that many Dissenters are truly pious, and as you avow your love towards them, though you think they commit a great sin by dissent; so I believe that many Episcopalians are, in the main, truly pious, and, as such, I really love them; though I regard their conformity as a sin against God.—To love only the perfect is to love none on this side of heaven.

If, in the course of my observations, I should make any false statement or unfair deduction, you will easily discover, and no doubt, cheerfully correct it. But, to pronounce my arguments fallacious, without proving them such, will satisfy only ignorant and credulous partizans. The necessary conciseness of this letter will render direct quotations and specific references impracticable; indeed, to the intelligent they would be superfluous, and to most others unavailing.

I shall now proceed to show that your church in its constitution, clerical orders, spirit, discipline, sacraments, pretensions, means of support, &c. is at direct variance with those instituted by the inspired apostles, and destructive of many explicit, important, and imperative enactments of the Almighty; and, consequently, that by adopting, defending, sanctioning, and adhering to such a communion, YOU ARE COMMITTING A GREAT SIN AGAINST GOD.

IT IS A GREAT SIN TO CONFORM TO THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND—

I. *Because its canons, articles, prayer-book, &c. are raised to greater practical authority than the Holy Scriptures.*—By those standards of human composition, and chiefly of popish origin, the ministers and members of your body are directed what to believe, and how to worship, dress, and act, in their church capacity. If you offend, by these only can you be officially tried and punished or acquitted. An appeal to the word of God, in justification of your views and conduct, would, at once, be over-ruled as foreign

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to the question in all matters of supposed ecclesiastical delinquency. Any presumed agreement between these standards and divine revelation does not affect the case; for, be it less or more, your appeal is not to the inspired volume, nor is the inquiry, What saith the Lord; but, What have the masters of our church, in their wisdom or ignorance decreed? The language of the evangelical Dissenter is, "To the law and the testimony;" while yours is, "To the decisions of men:"—thereby making void the law of God.

II. *Because it has another head besides Jesus Christ, and practically above him.*—The political powers in this country virtually constructed all the laws of your church—determined what doctrines should be preached—what prayers should be offered—what incomes the clergy should receive—and what kind and amount of labour they should perform. Even the existence of your church, as distinguished from voluntary and independent societies, depends on the mere will of the national council. The question with the ministers and members of your denomination is, not What Christ would have them believe and do, but What is commanded by Parliament? If they perceive a disagreement between the injunctions of the state and the Saviour's word, they are bound, while Conformists, to obey men rather than God; and this we believe thousands are painfully exemplifying every day—sinning against God and their consciences, to preserve their incomes and social respectability.

III. *Because it destroys the liberty divinely granted to the children of God.*—They are not, as conformists, allowed to choose their own creed or their own minister, nor to worship God according to their own views of the divine will, nor even to withdraw the support of your church with impunity. They cannot modify an article of their faith, nor change a rite in their religious services. They must believe, worship, sit, stand, bow, turn, kneel, pray, sing, vow, and do every thing else, according to minute and unalterable prescription, without having a vote or a voice in the affair. However intelligent, pious, and numerous they may be, they are treated as dependent children or ignorant vassals, having no judgment or will of their own. "To take heed what they hear, to search the scriptures, and to "try the spirit of the preacher," are precepts which cannot be effectively obeyed by them. Abject compliance is their constant and imperative duty.—That the state-church interferes with the christian and political liberties of Dissenters, they learn by every day's painful experience.

IV. *Because it is actually sustained only by the sword of the civil magistrate.*—The original churches of Christ were supported only by the voluntary offerings of the faithful, who gave as God prospered and inclined them. But in your church the sword alone compels the people to pay tithes, church rates, and Easter dues. The sword makes way for the newly-appointed priest to the parish pulpit, against the wishes of the inhabitants. The sword makes us wash the parson's surplice, play the organ, sweep out the church, repair the walls, mend the windows, provide bibles and prayer-books, furniture for the altar, and bread and wine for the communicants. Nothing is left to the exercise of Christian benevolence—at least, according

to the constitution of the state system. Withhold the stipend of the most unworthy clergyman—and the bailiff becomes your guest—the prison your home—and beggary the portion of your wives and children. The weapons of your warfare are not spiritual but carnal, and might be as justly used by heathens to support idolatry, as by you to maintain the Christian religion.

V. *Because it is destitute of even the semblance of Christian discipline.*—This evil it annually confesses and deplures, but never removes. It admits merely moral and often immoral persons into the pulpit, with the same facility as it does able, holy, and orthodox young men; and, in many cases, the former have the preference. It tolerates drunken, gambling, fox-hunting and dancing ministers in its desks, by hundreds and thousands. Men of every faith, and of no faith at all, are placed to watch over the souls of the people—and such is the apathy and ignorance of most Conformists, that these clergymen are generally caressed and followed equally with the most able and holy pastors. People of all opinions—and people giving not the slightest evidence of being Christians in heart, judgment, or conduct—surround your altars, and eat and drink to their own condemnation—not discerning the Lord's body. You make no difference between the unclean and the clean. In your offices you address all alike—and all too as genuine disciples of Christ.

VI. *Because the sanctioned pretensions of its clergy are arrogant and impious in the last degree.*—They aver that none but themselves are qualified and entitled to preach, even in a hospital, a prison, a penitentiary, or a workhouse; that to them is exclusively and rightly confided the spiritual instruction of all the old and young in their respective parishes. They profess to confer the Holy Ghost on each other in ordination, to regenerate all their children in baptism, to certify the young of God's favour in confirmation, to absolve the dying from all their sins, and to pronounce all they inter safe in Christ. They declaim against our preaching as inefficacious—our baptisms as worthless—and our marriages as invalid. They are taught to look with contempt on all but themselves; nor do many of them fail duly to learn this sectarian lesson. Their pretensions are not exceeded by the church of Rome, or by any impostor that ever appeared in the world.

VII. *Because it has no charity for any but its own confiding and obsequious adherents.*—It denounces damnation on all who believe not its inexplicable exposition of the adorable Trinity. Its first twelve canons pronounce the heaviest vengeance on all who do not precisely conform to the laws, rules, and worship of the hierarchy. It regards the most holy, useful, and learned divines among Dissenters, as sinful intruders into the ministry, and as being only in pretended holy orders. It condemns them for officiating in meeting-houses, and for otherwise labouring out of the hierarchy to lead the young to Christ. Its pulpits would be profaned were they to enter them, and its churches unconsecrated were they once to lead the devotions of the people in them. And most of its ministers and zealous partizans, breathing the true spirit of their system, (while friendly with infidel and profligate conformists,) exercise no charity towards the holiest disciples of Christ, if found

in the ranks of dissent. Liberal and benevolent Clergymen and Conformists have been taught in a much better school than their own.

VIII. *Because it is constituted on principles directly at variance with those of the primitive churches.*—In the apostolic age, and long after, all Christian churches were congregational and independent; and their permanent offices were only of two orders, bishops or presbyters and deacons—as the first authorities of your church have frequently admitted. But the Church of England is a great hierarchy, composed of ten thousand societies, embracing the gross population of the country, and entirely under the controul of the civil government. It has splendid cathedral institutions—as useless as they are magnificent and costly. It has a long grade of ministers, from the princely primate to the half-fed curate. It has offices unknown to scripture—and clerical titles the apostles never heard of. It generally rewards the most useless and idle functionaries with the fattest benefices and preferments. In a word, the founders of your church presumed to be wiser and kinder than God—superseding his plans, as if badly drawn, or adapted only to the noviciate condition of Christianity.

IX. *Because it places non-essential modes and ceremonies on a par with the most important doctrines of Christ.*—No child can be publicly dedicated to God in baptism without the sign of the cross—even though its salvation is supposed to depend on this sacrament; and the employment of sponsors is insisted on—though the clergy well know that the promises required can never be performed. No person is allowed to receive the Lord's Supper except on his knees, and in the attitude assumed by Catholics in worshipping the elements. No clergyman can officially read his prayer-book in the church, or at the grave, except in a surplice. But while there is such stickling for forms and ceremonies of human device, wicked men may be sponsors, and receive the sacrament—heterodox and unholy parsons may preach—and impenitent adults may be absolved, and interred with canonical honours.

X. *Because it awfully deceives and deludes the souls of the people.*—Every baptized person is declared to be regenerated by the Holy Ghost—sanctified—elected—made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. It also teaches that once in grace, in grace for ever—thereby sealing the final salvation of all the baptized. It tells the young, at their confirmation, that all of them—good and bad—have the especial favour of God—a declaration not more false than injurious. It officially addresses the vilest sinners as though they were all saints of the Lord. It consoles the bereaved with the assurance that their relative, though he died in a fit of beastly drunkenness, is gone to heaven. In a word, it daily deludes the souls of the people to their destruction. And as for the doctrine of the CHURCH CATECHISM, it has, as a pious clergyman observes, “**DESTROYED MORE SOULS** than any one single error that has been branded on the black list of heresy.”

But I must not enlarge, however easy the labour and inviting the subject. To my preceding Tracts on the Church, I beg to refer you for further information on this topic. Enough, I trust, has been advanced, not only to justify my dissent, but to condemn your conformity. Indeed, I am perfectly at a loss to understand how any pious and intelligent person, WHO MAKES THE SCRIPTURES HIS PROFFESSED DIRECTORY IN SPIRITUAL MATTERS, can remain a month within the unhallowed pale of your heretical church. A TITHE OF YOUR ERRORS WOULD SOON DRIVE ME AND MOST INDEPENDENT MINISTERS FROM THE CONGREGATIONAL BODY.

I am, yours, &c.

WILLIAM THORN.

CHURCHMAN'S QUARREL

WITH THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

By the REV. W. THORN, Winchester.

IN the judgment of a genuine Conformist, the Church of England is the infallible standard of religious right and wrong—truth and error—inefficiency and usefulness; and by its laws and workings he tries all other systems and sects of Christianity. He believes that every portion of it—made binding on its ministers and adherents—is essentially requisite for its completeness, beauty, and successful operation; that were any of it removed or modified, it would be defaced and impaired; and that those avowed and practical Churchmen, who differ from himself on this point, are, so far, theoretical Dissenters, if not ecclesiastical hypocrites—giving a religious sanction and support to what they regard as either vain or sinful.

But it is certain (and will be presently proved) that the Church of England enjoins many notions and actions unknown to the Holy Scriptures, and evidently opposed to their admitted genius and enactments. Nor is it less apparent that most advocates of the state-system (as if wiser in their generation than God was 2000 years ago) gravely contend for these human devices, as being essential props and parts of a Christian church, and indispensable for effecting the salvation of the human race.

For example:—How zealously and eloquently do they plead for the alliance of Church and State—the coercive support of the priesthood—the religious headship of the prince—ministerial gradations—forms of prayer, &c.—as if the cause of Christ must inevitably suffer and perish without them. You hear this species of argument in the pulpit, the parlour, at public meetings, and even in the British Parliament—indeed, every where among genuine Churchmen.

BUT THESE PERSONS SEEM LITTLE CONSCIOUS THAT THEY ARE ASSUMING TO THEMSELVES GREATER WISDOM AND CONCERN FOR THE CHRISTIAN CAUSE THAN WERE POSSESSED BY THE ALMIGHTY; WHOM THEY INDIRECTLY CHARGE WITH NEGLECTING THE TRUE INTERESTS OF CHRISTIANITY, AND EVEN WITH HAVING MADE VARIOUS ESSENTIAL BLUNDERS IN HIS GOSPEL INSTITUTES!!

Such Churchmen do not plead for simply carrying out the hints and elements of divine revelation, by accommodating the circumstantials of religious worship and practice to present times and customs—without violating its spirit and intentions, or infringing the rights and liberties of believers—but for mere human inventions and arrangements, alien from the Bible and at direct variance with its specific and determinate legislation.

Now, supposing the national system—though differing widely from the word of God—to be right and requisite; it will necessarily follow—

I. That, in the judgment of genuine Churchmen, the inspired Scriptures do not constitute a safe and sufficient guide for a perfect Christian Church in our land and day; and that it is necessary to act independently of them, and even in opposition to their spirit and letter, in order to sustain and extend true religion, in an efficient and respectable manner in this country!!

II. That in forming the first apostolical churches, and in giving directions

concerning their construction and workings, the inspired writers manifested great carelessness and want of judgment—many things of vital interest being wholly forgotten and many serious blunders being made by them, which wise and good men, of the present day, find it expedient to supply and correct!!

III. That though the Holy Writings contain wise, ample, and explicit directions respecting all moral, spiritual, social, and domestic duties and obligations, and are alike applicable to all ages and places; yet their laws and examples, concerning the constitution and regulations of a Christian Church, are striking exceptions—being manifestly defective and erroneous, and ill adapted to the present country and times!! And—

IV. That Jesus Christ must feel himself greatly indebted to, and highly pleased with, the founders of the English Church, for having supplied his omissions and rectified his mistakes, respecting the scheme of religious means and worship; and that were he now, with his improved information on these matters, to give the world a second edition of his heavenly will, he would materially modify the original Scriptures, and incorporate the canons, articles, laws, and liturgy of the State Religion, in his improved productions!!

From these humiliating deductions no honest and genuine churchman can fairly or possibly escape. He may warmly denounce them as ill-natured and offensive; but they are indisputably his own—at least, such I must regard them till he shall clearly prove them to be illegitimate or inapplicable to himself.

To show that I am bringing no general charges against the genuine conformist, without specification and proof, I shall refer to various instances, in explanation and support of them. And to prevent all reasonable dispute, I shall exclude from my catalogue of allegations every case of the least questionable description among persons but moderately acquainted with the scriptures and the Church of England, and concerning which the slightest difference of biblical interpretation may be supposed to exist.—I shall begin with—

FIRST.—*The material Defects and Omissions of the Holy Scriptures!!*

In the Church of England, (which the genuine Conformist regards as perfect and entire, containing nothing defective, erroneous, or redundant,) there are many things, deemed and enforced as instructive, valuable, and indispensable, which the sacred Penmen—even while inspired by the Holy Spirit—neglected to insert in the New Testament, viz:—

1. The apostles forgot or neglected to mention that *sponsors, vows, and the sign of the cross*, were proper and absolutely requisite in every public baptism; for in the Church of England these are indispensable.

2. They forgot or neglected to tell us that every child baptized by an ordained clergyman is then and there *savingly regenerated and sanctified by the Holy Ghost*; which we know to be the case, according to the Church of England.

3. They forgot or neglected to prohibit every person from preaching the gospel who is not *ordained and endued with the Holy Spirit by a lord bishop*—as is the case in the Church of England.

4. They forgot to give us a proper list of spiritual functionaries, improperly neglecting to name *arch-bishops, addressed as dukes, and lord-*

bishops, addressed as barons, chancellors, deans, archdeacons, canons, prebendaries, rectors, &c. which are essential officers in the Church.

5. They forgot to designate the Lord's table *an altar*, to order that it must always stand at the *east-end* of the church, and that all communicants must eat and drink the bread and wine *on their knees*.

6. They forgot to draw up or sanction a *liturgical service*, and to prohibit the official reading of the Prayer Book in the desk or at the grave, except the priest be attired in a *white surplice*.

7. They forgot to mention that none but prelatically ordained ministers ought to be allowed *to marry, baptize, preach, bury, or educate the people*; claims seriously preferred by the church and its genuine advocates.

8. They forgot to institute the useful sacrament of *confirmation*, to relieve sponsors of their broken vows, to assure young persons indiscriminately of the favour of God, and to qualify them for the holy communion.

9. They forgot to tell us that all graves and churches must be made due east and west, and formally and devoutly *consecrated by a bishop*, before they can be safely and legally used by the national clergy.

10. They forgot to sketch our *beautiful and beneficial cathedral institutions*—to prescribe their splendid and imposing services, or to name their numerous officers, their province, their pay, and their attire.

11. They forgot to state that every christian country must be divided into *sees, deaneries, archdeaconries, and parishes*; (for they had no notion of order!); and that every priest must keep to his own territorial division.

12. Finally, they forgot to sanction the public reading of *apocryphal books* in the place of scripture; to appoint a sabbatical observance of annual *feast, fast, and saint's days, &c.* which are strictly enjoined in the Church of England.

In a word, their neglects are many and serious, as the preceding specimens indisputably manifest. They must, therefore, be regarded as incompetent authorities in ecclesiastical matters; at all events, they cannot be safely and fully relied on by the more enlightened ministers and members of the Church!

SECOND.—*The numerous and fearful Blunders of the Holy Scriptures!*

Still assuming, with the true and genuine conformist, that the Church of England is right in all its constituent and enforced peculiarities; it follows that the sacred writers were wrong in many of their institutions, laws, and arrangements, which are unquestionably at variance with our immaculate and transcendently excellent hierarchy!!

1. The apostles blundered in adopting and recommending exclusively the *voluntary support of religion*; for the churchman is fully convinced that compulsory tithes, rates, dues, fees, and taxes, are absolutely necessary to keep the clergy and repair their churches!

2. They blundered in declaring Christ to be *the only head and lawgiver of the church*; for unless the civil government exercise headship and legislative prerogatives also and equally, the state church must soon fall into contempt!

3. They blundered in making *God's word the only standard* of faith, wor-

ship, and religious practice, and the sole object of ultimate appeal to believers ; for acts of parliament are absolutely needed to regulate the affairs of the church !

4. They blundered in allowing *liberty of action* in matters not essential to salvation ; for except men are tied down to the minutest rules there would be no uniformity in the state religion—and what is religion worth without it !

5. They blundered in admitting only (as far as they could judge) *pious and regenerate persons* into christian fellowship ; and in expelling those who subsequently evinced an unsanctified heart.—There is no such partiality in the English Church !

6. They blundered also respecting the *final condition of men*—declaring that all adults who died destitute of faith and practical godliness, are eternally lost ; for the church piously sends thousands of such every year to heaven !

7. They blundered in declaring that God alone has power upon earth *to forgive sins* ; for the state clergy—apostolically ordained—can absolve from all future pains and penalties any sick and dying person who confesses himself sorry for his transgressions !

8. They blundered in sanctioning only the *spiritual weapons* of reasoning and admonition in their holy warfare ; for unless carnal ones are occasionally employed, the Church of England could not obtain half the money it demands !

9. They blundered in granting the members of settled churches the power of *choosing, examining, and dismissing their teachers* ; because it is well known that most of them have not sufficient learning or wisdom to do any such thing !

10. They blundered in countenancing field, street, and private-house preaching, by men not college-bred, and without reading the liturgy ; as such conduct is *disorderly, lowers the priestly office, and looks just like modern Methodism !*

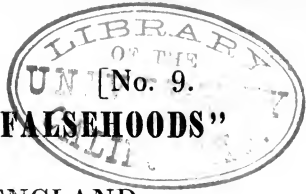
But I must not enlarge—nor is it needful. Enough has been adduced to establish my doctrine, *that if the Church of England be right, the New Testament is wrong ; and that the inspired apostles were less competent to institute a christian church than the founders of the English Hierarchy.*

It is plain that the heads of the parliamentary church have not only appointed and enforced many things which are not noticed in the new Testament ; but that they have made various laws for ministers and people which counteract and destroy many that were framed and divinely enjoined by the holy apostles.

Many of these human devices are of such a palpable and practicable description, that they are of daily observation and perpetual annoyance to thousands of good men. In fact, so glaring and grievous are most of them, that he who would scrupulously obey the ALMIGHTY, MUST BE IN CONSTANT AND DIRECT OPPOSITION TO THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

To the genuine conformist, the New Testament must be a source of perpetual annoyance ; with its opinions he is perpetually annoyed by Dissenters ; and in all his contests with them, it lies as a block in his way. Hence a hundred shifts and contrivances to evade its application ; and hence the practice of circulating the articles, canons, prayer-book, homilies, &c. with it, in order to prejudice the minds of the people in favour of his scheme, and to make them read the scriptures through the coloured spectacles of old mother church.

In conclusion, whatever prejudiced and ignorant churchmen may say in honour of the Bible, or however they may deprecate the foregoing expositions ; the state system virtually dethrones the Saviour—annuls many portions of his blessed word—charges the inspired writers with negligence and error—oppresses the genuine christian, and fearfully retards the progress of divine truth in this country !



“DISTRESSING AND WICKED FALSEHOODS”

TAUGHT BY THE

CLERGY of the CHURCH of ENGLAND.

A LETTER to the REV. W. HARDING, M.A. VICAR of HOCKLEY, ESSEX.

By the REV. W. THORN, Winchester.

REV. SIR,

A gentleman recently sent me three publications of yours, the avowed object of which is to guard the public against, what you are pleased to designate, “SOME VERY “WICKED BOOKS AND TRACTS” of my writing, and to chastise the Rev. Mr. TEMPLE, of Rochford, for circulating them. Your critical remarks, however, as far as I am concerned, are confined to my pamphlet on the Church Catechism—in the preface to which you profess to have discovered “THREE WICKED AND DISTRESSING FALSEHOODS.”—“The statements,” you remark, “are these: that in the Church Catechism—1st. There is not a word affirming the deity of the Son and Holy Spirit—“2nd. The child is led to believe that the Apostles’ Creed was composed by the “Apostles of Christ, and to suppose that it was inspired equally with the canonical “epistles of the New Testament—3rd. It, (the child) is commanded merely to say “its prayers.—I ventured to call these ‘distressing and wicked falsehoods,’ and I “had shown that the designation clearly belonged to them.”

1. Now I feel highly gratified that, after having attentively read my book, with the eye of a scholar and divine, and with the feelings of a determined adversary, ready to detect and magnify the slightest mistakes into “distressing and wicked falsehoods,” you should have adduced only *three*—and these having no immediate connexion with the subject of “*Baptismal Regeneration*”—professedly discussed in my pages. You, indeed, talk of “many others,” and of finding my pamphlet “a tissue of falsehoods and “misrepresentations;” yet it may be confidently inferred that had you really discovered another, it would have been added to the little catalogue of “lies,” with which you affect to be so greatly dissatisfied. I am, therefore, warranted in supposing that you have marked all the “falsehoods” which in your judgment the pamphlet contains, and in *claiming your sanction as to the truth of all my other remarks.*

2. Under this natural conviction, your more sagacious friends might probably question your prudence in fiercely assailing and giving publicity to a work, *every material and leading statement of which you indirectly admit to be true.* But a note at the end of the third tract clearly develops the design and policy of your authorship. You have “just completed the “building of a National School” in your parish, and “there is, at present, “a deficiency in the Building Fund of upwards of £100!” Your high-vended tracts may answer the end of expensive begging advertisements, and possibly procure the needful through your Bookselling Agents, with a little popularity and personal remuneration into the bargain!

3. Though my “statements” might be either defended as literally or

virtually correct, or apologized for as mere inadvertencies, to which all fallible writers are liable, and from which your own publications are by no means exempt, I shall do neither; but allow you the gratification of continuing to designate them, "three distressing and wicked falsehoods." Nor shall I attempt to show, that when you manifestly denounce me as a "liar," &c. the epithets are in any wise inapplicable. And, further, I promise, in the next edition of my book to explain, modify, or expunge, the expressions against which you have so feelingly protested. More than this no reasonable antagonist can require.

4. You will, therefore, perceive that personal justification, or the defence of my pamphlet, forms no part of my present design. My object is to show that you, and all other state clergymen, constantly inculcate many more and worse falsehoods than you pretend to have found in my "very wicked" books and tracts; and that, consequently, you must be much more criminal in this matter than myself. This I shall have no difficulty in proving to the satisfaction of all persons "of common sense and common honesty;" and to the entire conviction of yourself and your reverend brethren also—provided you are as clear-sighted and conscientious in respect to the "lies" of your own sect, as you have been in reference to what you so denominate in my publications.

5. You are aware that there are various kinds of lies—Doctrinal, Practical, Logical, Positive, Negative, Expressed, Insinuated, and Implied; that they originate in Pride, Avarice, Custom, Ignorance, or Inadvertency, and that they are discoverable by applying to them the test of Revealed Truth, Demonstration, Equity, and Universally-admitted Facts. You are likewise aware that the most pernicious lies, are the Doctrinal and Practical—the most delusive, the Insinuated and Implied—and the most despicable, such as arise from Avarice and Pride.

6. Nor will you venture to deny, that to "tell the people the" BIBLE "says what it really does *not* say, or else that it does not say what it really *does* say," is as truly and manifestly a falsehood, as denying, perverting, or contradicting the statements and sentiments of the Church Catechism; and that a departure from truth is just as easily discovered by intelligent persons in the one case as in the other.—"They have spoken *lying* words in "my name which I have not commanded them."—I shall now specify a few of your—

"DISTRESSING AND WICKED FALSEHOODS."

I. IN YOUR SABBATH AND DAILY SCHOOLS you regularly teach and compel multitudes of young people—who *never had any* godfathers or godmothers at all—to utter a direct and wicked falsehood, by saying their godfathers and godmothers gave them their names. The present BISHOP OF NORWICH says, that such children form the *majority* of your scholars!

II. You compel every individual child you catechise, to declare that it had godfathers and godmothers (both in the plural), which is not true; since a male has *only one* godmother, and a female *only one* godfather! By this means, you certainly inculcate as great and glaring a lie as any you profess to have discovered in the preface of my book.

III. You constantly teach and compel all your scholars to declare that they were—without exception—made members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven, in baptism; or, in other words, were made as real christians in heart, association, and prospect, as the Apostle Paul himself. A greater doctrinal lie was never taught by the wildest heretic that ever existed.

IV. You diligently teach them *all* to believe and say that Christ has unquestionably redeemed them *all*—that the Spirit sanctifieth them *all*—and that they are *all* in a state of salvation; meaning that they are all freed from condemnation, are under a divine influence, and are in a fair way for the kingdom of heaven! Are any of my assumed falsehoods so palpable, distressing, or wicked as these?

V. According to your own reasoning, you teach children to declare that they learn the divinity of Christ and the Holy Spirit from the “Belief,” which contains not a word certainly *affirming* this glorious doctrine, or whence it can be legitimately inferred. Here is a great logical falsehood. Your Prayer Book also designates this “Belief” the “Apostles’ Creed,” by which you impose another cheat upon your ignorant pupils.

VI. IN EVERY BAPTISM you and your brethren distinctly insinuate a gross lie to the Almighty, by thanking him for having certainly regenerated the child by the Holy Ghost. And you expressly intimate the same falsehood to all the people present on the occasion—who, confiding in your judgment, must retire from the font believing the shocking untruths you venture audibly to tell the Almighty in the form of thanksgiving!

VII. You compel three adult persons to utter a most fearful falsehood every time you publicly baptize a baby. You make them promise and vow to do what you are sure no sponsors ever yet did, what cannot be done by them, and what they seldom seriously intend or attempt to do. You, in fact, make them perjure their precious souls in the administration of a christian sacrament!

VIII. IN CONFIRMATION you carry on the same dreadful system of delusion and falsehood. You take, among others, a number of unconverted boys and girls to the bishop to hear and believe the lies his lordship utters, while assuring them that they were all regenerated by water and the Holy Ghost in baptism, and while he certifies them *all* of having the favour and gracious goodness of God. All this you sanction and promote in your parish.

IX. IN MARRYING the most ungodly couple in Hockley, you pronounce them to be God’s servants; though you know they are the servants of the devil. And you make the man say, that he *worships* the woman with his body, and endows her with *all* his worldly goods—you being, at the same time, fully assured that he does neither. Here, again, you appear the teacher of “distressing and wicked falsehoods.”

X. When you VISIT THE SICK and read, as in duty bound, the service appointed for that occasion, you lead them all to believe that God has committed to you an authority to absolve them from all their sins; and in the name of God you pretend to do it—with a lie in your right hand—thereby

fatally deluding the souls of the dying, and sending them quiet and blindfold to the pit of perdition. What are my imaginary falsehoods to these?

XI. You also lie at **THE GRAVE**; for when you bury the corpse of the most irreligious wretch in your parish—though he died without giving the least valid evidence of a real change of heart—you indirectly, but plainly, avow your belief that his spirit is in heaven. You publicly bless God for taking the soul of *your dear brother* to himself, and express your hope of the resurrection of his body to eternal life.

XII. You declare “the Church of England” to be “a true and apostolical church.” This is a wicked falsehood—for the orders of its officers, its coercive method of support, its entire subjection to the civil power, its popish rites and ceremonies, its parliamentary prayers, &c. are confessedly any thing but correct, or even traceable transcripts of the churches constituted by the holy and divinely directed **APOSTLES** of Christ.

1. The above are but a few of the many “distressing and wicked falsehoods” regularly inculcated by you and your clerical brethren. I have selected cases as clear as the day, and of daily occurrence. But sufficient have been mentioned to convict you of being, on your own calculations, at least, four times as culpable as myself, by sanctioning and teaching four times as many lies as you pretend to have discovered in my work on the Church Catechism. You not only lie yourself, but, what is much worse, you compel others to lie also, or refuse them the ordinance of your papistical persuasion.

2. In your own words, I may remark, that these logical and doctrinal lies “are not about questions of any doubt and difficulty; not about things with respect to which men of common sense and common honesty might differ; not about matters of opinion, [among sensible men even in your own denomination,] but about plain matters of fact, almost as plain as whether there is or is not a church in our church yard. . . . It is, indeed, distressing to think,” as you elsewhere observe, “that any persons calling themselves Christians—and much more, that any taking to themselves the name of the ministers of Christ, should be capable of circulating what is contrary to truth.”

3. If, therefore, you are really an honest and consistent man, you will immediately quit a communion in which you cannot minister or remain without teaching or sanctioning many most distressing, wicked, and soul-destroying falsehoods. You can join no other protestant evangelical church which inculcates a hundredth part of the errors broached by your own. What you tell Mr. **TEMPLE**, I would repeat to you and your brethren—“Of this I am well assured, that so long as you can adopt, defend, and disseminate the above statements. . . . until, indeed, you are heartily ashamed of and can cordially disclaim and repudiate them—**YOU KNOW NOT WHAT MANNER OF SPIRIT YOU ARE OF**. . . . You are not thoroughly **HONEST**—you are not **SCRUPULOUS** in your adherence to **TRUTH**.”

4. But in case the love of place, and, perhaps of **GOOD PAY**, should influence you more than the love of truth and immortal souls—or should you still attempt to impose your dangerous dogmas on your parishioners; then, (on the principle you have adopted against myself, but with **TEN-FOLD PROPRIETY**,) I call upon them and the public to place no further confidence in you or your church, as guides to holiness and heaven, to keep their children from your polluted fountains and pernicious schools, and to withdraw themselves from a system pre-eminently calculated to lead them into the most fatal errors, with all their eternal consequences.

I am, &c.

WILLIAM THORN.

Winchester, Sept. 28, 1840.

THE SIN OF TEACHING CHILDREN THE CHURCH CATECHISM.

By the Rev. W. THORN, Winchester.

CHRISTIAN PARENTS,—I hope I may take it for granted that few things would distress you more, than to learn that the persons, to whom you entrust the education of your children, teach them doctrines widely at variance with the revealed will of God, and highly injurious to their moral and spiritual welfare; and that, were you fully convinced of this fact, you would at once, and at any sacrifice, withdraw them from such defective and pernicious instruction.

Now, I think, I shall have little difficulty in convincing you, that all children, taught in the SABBATH AND DAY SCHOOLS OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND, are compelled to repeat the most manifest falsehoods, and to imbibe various sentiments directly opposed to scripture, and fearfully adapted to lead their minds into the ways of error, iniquity, and everlasting destruction.

This great evil is produced chiefly by using the CHURCH CATECHISM—a manual of religious instruction, deplorably meagre in the amount of its information, as well as awfully erroneous in its doctrines and impositions. In this brief exposure of its various evils, I shall first, by way of preface, notice a few of its minor misrepresentations, and then one of a more serious and affecting character.

Q. “*Who gave you that name?—A. My godfathers and godmothers, &c.*”

1. From this question and answer, children will naturally conclude, either that godfathers and godmothers are of divine appointment; or that rites and ceremonies may be lawfully introduced into the Christian church without any such appointment. The former is a grossly erroneous assumption, the latter an egregiously false doctrine.

2. They are indirectly taught that to promise and vow to do what cannot be done, are consistent with the religion of Jesus Christ; since it is certain that sponsors have no power of securing the fulfilment of what they promise: in fact, such promises never are fulfilled, and are seldom regarded as any thing more than a mere form.

3. They are commanded to say their godfathers and godmothers *gave* them their name—evidently meaning that they originated, or first fixed upon it—which is not true in one case out of a hundred. To suppose it means they merely repeated the name to the priest, is to suppose that it means just nothing at all!!

4. Every individual scholar is indirectly taught to believe and assert that it had godfathers and godmothers (both in the plural,) which is equally false; as a boy has **ONLY ONE** godmother and a girl **ONLY ONE** godfather.

5. According to the Bishop of Norwich, the majority of children in church schools never had any sponsors; and yet **ALL** the young people are compelled to say that their godfathers and godmothers gave them their names—which is often a manifest untruth.

Q. “*Dost thou not think thou art bound to believe and to do as they have promised for thee?—A. Yes, verily; and by God's help so I will.*”—Here the ignorant child is commanded—to avow its intelligent approval of all its sponsors have said and done in its name! To declare itself bound in faith and practice by all their unscriptural engagements! And virtually TO SWEAR (by God's help, or So help me God) to believe and do whatever they have promised for it! It may be safely asserted, that no instance of equal presumptuous impiety can be found in any other protestant manual of religious instruction in christendom!

Many other errors and misrepresentations of a similar kind are found in this Catechism, but which I have not space to enumerate here. I must therefore proceed to the doctrine of BAPTISMAL REGENERATION which is plainly taught in the following language:

"Wherein I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven."

FIRST.—*I shall expound the DOCTRINE taught in this sentence.*

I. In the words just quoted, it is declared, *in terms as plain as any the English language can furnish*, that every person baptized in the Church of England is divinely and savingly regenerated, is made—what he was not before—the real and spiritual child of God, or, in other words, a true and genuine Christian. You have only to analyze the scholar's reply, to perceive clearly that I have not ascribed assumed effects to Church baptism which the language does not fully warrant.

(1.) Every child is said to be made, through this rite, or in consequence of it, a spiritual member of Christ's mystical body, and thereby becomes identified with him as its gracious covenant head.

(2.) From the moment of its baptism it becomes the child of God by a new birth; is made a partaker of the divine nature; is brought into a new and near relationship to the Almighty; and receives a new and holy life through Jesus Christ.

(3.) It is really and fully entitled to all the covenanted blessings of God's peculiar people; a rightful participant in all the consolations of the most devoted Christians; will finally escape future misery, and certainly enjoy everlasting happiness.

This baptism is supposed to place the child in a state of salvation, to invest it with every Christian grace, and to ensure to it every blessing bestowed on the most holy and devoted servants of Christ. It becomes as really and radically a Christian in nature, state, and privileges, as was Paul himself. Indeed, I defy any person to state, in terms more plain and significant, the conversion, adoption, and eternal safety, of any true believer in the world.

Subsequent parts of the Catechism distinctly inculcate the same doctrine: "I heartily thank our Heavenly Father that he hath called me to this *state of salvation*, through Jesus Christ our Saviour, and I pray God to give me his grace that I may *continue* in the same unto my life's end. Christ hath *redeemed me*, and all mankind. The Holy Ghost *sanctifieth me*, and all the elect people of God. For being by nature born in sin, and the children of wrath, we are *hereby made* the children of grace."

II. To show further that such is unquestionably the sense of the Catechism, I have only to prove that it is the doctrine of the Prayer Book—as both were compiled by the same authorities.

(1.) In the service of PUBLIC BAPTISM of children the priest says, "We call upon Thee for this infant, that he coming to thy holy baptism may *receive remission of his sins by spiritual regeneration.*" The child having been baptized, he adds, "We yield Thee hearty thanks, most Merciful Father, that it hath pleased Thee to *regenerate this infant with thy Holy Spirit*, to receive him for thine own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into thy holy church."

(2.) In PRIVATE BAPTISM, he says of the child, "Who being born in original sin, and in the wrath of God, is now by the laver of regeneration in baptism, received into the number of the children of God. *Doubt ye not*, therefore, but earnestly believe that he hath likewise favourably received this present infant, that he hath embraced him with the arms

“of his mercy; and, (as he hath promised in his holy word,) *will give unto him the blessing of eternal life, and make him partaker of his heavenly kingdom.*”

(3.) In CONFIRMATION, the same doctrine is taught nearly in the same words:—“Almighty and everlasting God, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these thy servants by water and the Holy Ghost, and hast given unto them forgiveness of sins, &c.” And, as a consequence, the bishop assures them of “the favour and gracious goodness of God towards them.” They are then admitted to the Lord’s supper, as real and undoubted Christians; as such they are addressed in the service of marriage, and in all other offices of the church while living, and are sent to heaven when they die !!

(4.) The TESTIMONIES of several eminent bishops and clergymen, in support of this view of the doctrine of the Catechism, I have given elsewhere. It is expressly admitted by the most orthodox, accurate, and influential writers among them. Indeed, I am not aware of any state-divine, of the least weight or credit even in his own denomination, who has ventured to assert that Baptismal Regeneration is not the doctrine of the Church Catechism; and he must commit a gross outrage on plain language and common sense who endeavours to make it speak a contrary sentiment.

SECONDLY.—*The shocking RESULTS of teaching this doctrine.*

Here, I might exhibit the influence it produces on the minds of intelligent BIBLE CHRISTIANS, leading them to condemn and despise the state-clergy, and all others who teach it; and of INFIDELS, strengthening their present sinful aversion to the religion of Christ. But I shall confine my observations to the effect it is calculated to produce in the views, hearts, lives, and destiny of the Ignorant and Credulous Adherents of the endowed religion.

I. THEIR OWN NATURAL CONCLUSIONS.—They will receive, as divine truth, admitting of no dispute, that they were all spiritually regenerated when they were christened by the parish priest. As they never read of a second regeneration, they will infer that all the spiritual renovation, requisite for their salvation, has been already effected. To pray for a new heart, or to be placed in a more safe condition, must appear absurd, and the attainment of it impossible. The great work is done; the necessary change is wrought; they are in a state of salvation; and they are secure for ever. Regeneration in adults is, therefore, all cant and methodism! Moreover, they learn from the 17th Article of the Church that, having been once in grace, they are in grace for ever—or, that having been elected, forgiven, regenerated, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, they shall certainly attain to eternal felicity.

Hence, while living in the utter neglect of vital religion, and in direct opposition to the laws of God, their consciences are rendered easy and comfortable! A doctrine more congenial to depraved human nature, *more likely to be cordially received and constantly retained in the unrenewed heart*; more adverse to holiness of life; more destructive to the souls of men; or more opposed to the whole scheme of Christianity, could hardly have entered into the minds of mankind!!

This infamous doctrine is held by ALL consistent members and ministers of the state-religion.—And if your children are taught this catechism, and do not cordially believe and constantly act upon it also, it must arise from

their being better instructed out of school than in it; or from enlightened, yet inconsistent, parsons convincing them that the prayer-book is not to be believed; or from your assuring them that both the parson and prayer-book are in the grossest error!! At all events, you run a great risk of conveying into their minds a principle which you may never be able to root out; and of rendering them unsound in the faith, unholy in their lives, and miserable for ever! And can you, for any worldly consideration, do such a wicked thing?

II. THE CONCESSIONS OF EMINENT CLERGYMEN.—To show that I am not putting too harsh a construction on this sentiment of the Catechism, I shall make the following impressive quotations:—

REV. MR. BIDDULPH—‘This doctrine is full of danger to the souls of men.’

REV. E. H. HEAD—‘The doctrine... that infants are regenerated by outward baptism, is clearly forbidden in scripture.’

BISHOP JEWEL—‘Verily to ascribe felicity, or the remission of sins, which is the inward work of the Holy Ghost, unto any manner of outward action whatsoever, is a superstitious, a gross, and Jewish error.’

REV. T. SCOTT—‘If baptism and being born again be terms of the same meaning, and if the one invariably accompany the other, so that all who are rightly baptized are regenerate, and none else; then all who die unbaptized, even infants, as well as others, all over the earth, and in every age of the world, without exception, are shut out of heaven, &c.’

REV. J. RILAND—‘All sponsors are believers; all the baptized are regenerate; all the confirmed forgiven; all the catechumens elect, &c. The consequence glares and blazes in the feelings of self-satisfaction, which our poor deluded victims enjoy, as supposing all their sins to be blotted out—not by having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by that new and living way—but as obeying the demands of the church.’

REV. MELVILLE HORNE—‘Fully convinced that baptism never was designed to convey regeneration—and has no such promise—I confidently conclude that no mortal ever was so regenerated. The expectation, therefore, I treat as universally vain and fallacious. I believe that it was the great leading error that first corrupted Christian truth, and probably will be the last to be generally banished from the Church [of England.] It strikes at every thing vital in Christianity—subverts the covenant of promise—makes faith and truth of no effect—supersedes the genuine work of the Spirit—vacates the necessity of conversion to decent moralists—carnalizes religion—substitutes the form of godliness for the power of it—AND HAS DESTROYED, I BELIEVE, MORE SOULS THAN ANY ONE SINGLE ERROR BRANDED ON THE BLACK LIST OF HERESY!!’

1. I feel confident that all persons, who make the word of God their guide in all religious matters, will agree with me in denouncing this doctrine of “Baptismal Regeneration,” as directly at variance with divine revelation, and as involving ONE OF THE GREATEST AND MOST PERNICIOUS ERRORS EVER PROMULGATED BY FALLEN MEN; and they will at once unalterably resolve never to allow their children to learn it, whatever may be the consequences of their refusal.

2. But what can be said sufficiently condemnatory of the conduct of those who believe the notion of Baptismal Regeneration to be antichristian and injurious, and yet regularly teach it at the font or in the school-room; diligently visit the houses of the poor, complaining of the evils of dissent and the “bad spirit” of Dissenters; and employ all their arts and arguments, with occasional bribes and threats, to rob dissenting sabbath-schools, and to get all the young into THEIR OWN HETERODOX SEMINARIES, IN ORDER TO TEACH THEM THE SHOCKING FALSEHOODS AND POISONOUS DOCTRINES OF THE CHURCH CATECHISM? ALAS! ALAS! HYPOCRISY CAN PROCEED NO FURTHER!!

THE EXTRAVAGANT CLAIMS

OF THE

NATIONAL CLERGY.

A LETTER TO THE REV. W. WILLIAMS, RECTOR OF HYDE, WINCHESTER.

By the Rev. W. THORN, Winchester.

REV. SIR,

You will easily remember being respectfully solicited to permit your Sunday school children to unite with ours and others, on some neutral ground, to celebrate the wedding of her Gracious Majesty with Prince Albert; and also (I hope with regret) your ungracious conduct on that interesting occasion.—You felt as if insulted by our friendly and disinterested proposal, and you manifested your displeasure by asserting that I “*had no business to have a Sunday-school at all!!*”

On my asking your reasons for making such a declaration, you deliberately replied—“*My remarks . . . involved a principle that I consider tenable, that to the accredited parochial ministers of the Church of England is exclusively confided the spiritual superintendence of all, whether young or old, resident within their respective cures.*”

Having shown that this claim was excessive, and “involved a principle” which, fully acted upon, would be destructive of all our Nonconforming institutions; I pressed you to explain the grounds on which you based such a doctrine—promising to pay them the most impartial and devout attention; and, if found valid, to comply at once with the truth, whatever might be the consequence.

Instead of yielding to this reasonable request, you coolly replied—That your exposition would effect no good purpose;—That your opinion was “shared in common with other clergymen;”—That you had more important engagements to occupy your time;—and That you must peremptorily close all further correspondence with me on the subject. Thus you indirectly bring a most serious charge against your brethren, which you will neither establish nor withdraw. The honour of such a procedure I shall leave to your more matured reflections.

Now, I think I can easily divine your motives for the diligent propagation of such a sentiment. It is intended to raise and secure the dignity of the state-priesthood above that of protestant dissenting ministers; and to prevent the credulous disciples of the church from forsaking its walls to attend the meeting-house, where, of course, the ordinances of the gospel are ineffectively administered!!—Indeed, it is nothing but the legitimate offspring of a selfish and supercilious priestcraft!

Assuming that you, and your clerical brethren, continue to hold and diffuse the afore-cited “principle;” and considering it both erroneous and

mischievous, I feel compelled to expose it through the medium of the press, and, if possible to convince you of its extravagance and folly. This object has been unavoidably delayed till now; but better late than never. And I hope to perform my task in a way to give you no unreasonable offence; and to combine great brevity with plainness and moderation. I can assure you that I intend nothing personally disrespectful to you and your clerical colleagues. I shall specify—

FIRST.—THE EXTRAVAGANT CLAIMS OF THE NATIONAL CLERGY.

These properly divide themselves into two classes—the *excessive*, as noted in your letter, and the *absurd*, as contained in your prayer-book, &c.

I. *I shall enumerate the EXCESSIVE.*—The clergy claim—(1.) A right to superintend the moral and spiritual instruction of all their fellow parishioners of every creed, rank, and age!—(2.) To be the exclusive preachers of the gospel within their respective cures—no dissenting minister being tolerated in them!—(3.) To baptize all the young—to marry all the adults—to console all the sick—and to bury all the dead—in their clerical districts!—(4.) To fill every office in which moral and religious instruction is required—even down to the penitentiary and poor-house!—(5.) To pocket all the money paid to religious teachers in this country—in the shape of parliamentary grants, rents, tithes, fees, and offerings!—(6.) To monopolize all ministerial honours, whether consisting of dress, titles, reverence, and the like, in the kingdom!

II. *I shall mention a few of the ABSURD.* They pretend—(1.) To regenerate savingly all the children they baptize!—(2.) To assure all the young of God's favour, in confirmation!—(3.) To confer the Holy Ghost on each other, in ordination!—(4.) To pardon and absolve all the penitent, in sickness!—(5.) To send all they canonically inter to heaven! (6.) To be the true and lineal successors of the apostles!

That these are among their claims and pretensions will not be disputed by any persons acquainted with your system, even in a very moderate degree.

SECONDLY.—THE NATURAL RESULTS OF SUCH CLERICAL CLAIMS.

Assuming, for a moment, that your principle is true and tenable, it will follow, as a matter of course,—(1.) That every nonconforming minister, should be silenced, and suffered to preach no more in any *parish* in this country!—(2.) That every one of our 9000 chapels should be closed, demolished, or converted to some other purpose!—(3.) That all our sabbath-school children should be finally dismissed, and their pious teachers discharged from their delightful office!—(4.) That no parents should religiously educate their children, except under the direction and superintendence of the clergy!—(5.) That no person should have the power to elect their own pastors, or of hearing any but those nominated to the parish pulpit!—(6.) That though people might conscientiously object to your modes of worship, they should be allowed to enjoy no other!—(7.) That if persuasion failed to suppress dissent, coercive measures, to the last degree, should be certainly adopted!—(8.) That however ignorant and

vicious a clergyman may be, the parishioners should be suffered to attend no other!—(9.) That by sanctioning and establishing *dissent*, the civil power has acted a treacherous part toward the church of Christ!—(10.) That all the church clergy are infallibly right, and all other ministers of the gospel in foul and fatal error!—(11.) That a religious system adopted and endowed by kings and legislators (in any country) offers a pledge of its superiority and perfection!—(12.) That the parish pulpit renders harmless and useful those very errors which are justly condemned in a dissenting chapel.—I shall now establish—

THIRDLY.—THE INVALIDITY OF THESE EXCLUSIVE CLAIMS.

If your principle be really maintainable, as you say it is, there must be some plain and valid grounds on which it rests. Where, or what they are, I am at a dead loss to comprehend.—That they are not the following, I am confident; and am prepared to prove, whenever you shall formally dispute my assumptions.—It cannot be supported,

I. *By any portion of the word of God*—nor by the spirit and genius which pervade the Holy Scriptures.—The very reverse is the fact—as every Bible Christian will readily admit.

II. *Nor by sterling reason*—for some of your pretensions are not surpassed in arrogance and absurdity by those of any heretic that has appeared in the world for the last five hundred years.

III. *Nor by superior ministerial qualifications*—for it is indisputable that most dissenting preachers are better prepared for their work than the majority of church clergymen.

IV. *Nor by your purer doctrines*—for several of your services inculcate sentiments which (as conceded by many clergymen) are defective, erroneous, and dangerous to the souls of men.

V. *Nor by your greater Christian charity*—for your “tenable principle,” if fully acted on, would soon fill our jails with Christian people, and light afresh the martyr fires of Smithfield.

VI. *Nor by your mode of official appointment*—for it is mostly a political job, or rank nepotism, and, in nearly every case, adverse to all genuine primitive practice.

VII. *Nor by your profound humility*—for the spirit breathed in your declarations is that of pure clerical consequence, and of sheer contempt for all who minister in a meeting-house.

VIII. *Nor by your superior sanctity*—for pious and holy as you and many of your brethren may be—the ranks of dissent can furnish your equals, if not your superiors, almost without number.

IX. *Nor by any mysterious power you may possess*—for you can no more regenerate and absolve sinners, than the humblest methodist preacher, —to attempt to do either is absurd and blasphemous.

X. *Nor by your better mode of support*—which is obtained by coercion—legalized persecution—and in direct violation of the voluntary method adopted and appointed by the apostles.

XI. *Nor by your liturgical services*—which are chiefly of popish origin—a schedule to an act of parliament—exceedingly defective—and entirely different from the free prayer of the first christian churches.

XII. *Nor by prelatical ordination and apostolical succession*—for every dissenting minister is more scripturally ordained than yourself—and equally a successor of the apostles.

XIII. *Nor by the laws of the land*—for it is as legal to worship in a chapel as in a church, and the dissenting minister is as much respected and protected by law as any lord-bishop in the country.

XIV. *Nor by your greater usefulness*—for you must be blind not to perceive that, with few exceptions, God blesses the labours of dissenting ministers beyond those of state clergymen.

But I must not enlarge. If you cannot sustain your monopoly of office, honours, and pay on the preceding or similar grounds, which you certainly cannot, I think you may, after all, despair of proving it “tenable” to the judgment of any reflecting and intelligent person. If you consider any of my assertions invalid, you will doubtless attempt to refute them—and I now challenge you to the undertaking. If confident in the goodness of your cause you will not be deterred by the trouble—nor merely complain of my “bad spirit”—nor plead pastoral engagements—nor represent the object as beneath your clerical condescension—methods common with your brethren in similar perplexing cases.

The fact is, and every wise and candid man knows and admits it, that I have as much “business to have a Sunday school,” as the Rector of Hyde; as good a right to preach in his parish and to his parishioners as he has himself; and his people are equally at liberty to attend any meeting-house in the city, as a parish church; and are much more likely to please God and benefit their own immortal souls in the former place than in the latter—as thousands have discovered, to their lasting consolation and delight.

From this and innumerable other daily-occurring specimens of high-church bigotry and intolerance, it must forcibly strike every impartial observer, that the Church of England exercises a most unhallowed influence over the minds of its holiest ministers and people. It is not along ago that you seriously hesitated whether to become a dissenting or a conforming preacher—some of your nearest and holiest relatives are still Dissenters. You, I believe to be a pious, zealous, and natural humble and amiable man; and yet, as a parliamentary episcopalian, you broach and maintain opinions adapted only to the dark and rude ages of ecclesiastical tyranny, and which, if fully carried out, would render our land a place of NONCONFORMING SCULLS

You will pardon my PRESUMPTION, if I modestly administer to you a word of EXHORTATION:—Make the revelation of God, and not the dictates of men, your exclusive rule of faith, worship, and discipline. By that you will be judged at the last day, and therefore it should be your guidance now. From this infallible source you will learn that your church, in its constitution, orders of priesthood, methods of support, dependence on the civil power, services, sacraments, discipline, spirit, catechetical tuition, &c. is totally at variance with the model-societies of the apostolic age—all of which were indisputably independent and voluntary.

Being made conscious of the imperfections and pernicious evils of your own system, you will be very cautious how you again attack Independent communities of Christians—free from its heresies, and bidding you defiance to discover in them any leading principle at variance with the revealed will of God. The Churchman should be “DUMB WITH SILENCE” in all religious and ecclesiastical matters. He lives in A GLASS BUILDING: let him therefore pause, ere he cast stones at the adamantine walls of Evangelical Dissenters.

I am, yours, &c.

WILLIAM THORN.

SOUL-DECEIVING BURIAL SERVICE OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

By the REV. W. THORN, Winchester.

THE immediate occasion of publishing the present tract may be briefly explained. Most of the church-yards in this city being full, a company was formed to make a general cemetery in which ministers of all denominations might officiate. Most of the managing directors were self-elected episcopalians—who, it was understood, while conducting the concerns of the company, would entirely bury their sectarian prejudices, and treat all religious parties with equal respect.

This, however, has not been done. To say nothing of the USELESS PRELATICAL FARCE of consecrating nearly three-fourths of the ground for the use of the state clergy, or of the STUPID BIGOTRY of building dwarf walls to divide the “HOLY” from the “UNHOLY” soil—thereby SEPARATING NEIGHBOURS MORE DISTINCTLY WHEN DEAD THAN THEY WERE WHILE LIVING—I shall simply refer to the TWO CHAPELS ERECTED FOR THE RESPECTIVE USE of DISSENTING AND CONFORMING MINISTERS—and which were to have been of EQUAL size and goodness. Now, that for the use of the clergy is a fine, imposing, and costly structure, while that for the dissenting pastors is comparatively little better than A SMALL BARN!! and much inferior in appearance and expense to the lodge, erected for the abode of the clerk of the cemetery.

This striking difference could not have been made on the ground that the dissenting ministers of Winchester are less respectable than the parochial priesthood—or that they subscribed less to the undertaking—nor because fewer people are likely to attend a funeral in the free than in the consecrated ground. But the manifest design of these NOBLE-MINDED committee-men was evidently to mortify dissenting ministers, and to degrade them in public opinion; and also, if possible, to prevent both churchmen and dissenters from being interred in the “UNSANCTIFIED” earth—thereby covertly attempting to secure to the parochial clergy the burial fees of the entire population of the city.

That this last object is one of great interest to the episcopalian directors may be inferred from the following circumstances:—In order to lighten the funeral expenses to the humbler classes of our fellow-citizens, the dissenters endeavoured to prevent ANY MINISTER'S FEE BEING CHARGED BY THE COMPANY FOR INTERMENTS IN THE UNCONSECRATED GROUND; but this generous proposition was stoutly resisted, no doubt, through fear of diminishing the burials on the other side of the wall, and the consequent perquisites of their reverend proteges, THE NON-SUBSCRIBING PAROCHIAL PRIESTHOOD.

That these redoubtable champions of the church have rather disgraced themselves than degraded the dissenting ministers of Winchester, must be the settled opinion of every intelligent and right-minded person among us; and whose good sense and English spirit will at once justify the present fully provoked and righteous exposure of the SOUL-DECEIVING BURIAL SERVICE OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

It should be observed that as persons of all denominations may be interred in either part of the cemetery, and as the expense is precisely the same in both case; the size and character of the chapels more especially affect the officiating ministers—though, of course, their respective congregations naturally sympathize with them in the affair.

I shall now proceed to notice, as plainly and concisely as I am able,

FIRST.—THE UNSCRIPTURAL NATURE OF THIS BURIAL SERVICE.

“Here it is to be noted,” (says the Prayer Book,) “That the office ensuing “is not to be used for any that die unbaptized, or excommunicate, or have “laid violent hands upon themselves.” The first class includes all unbaptized infants and adults—the second, persons cut off from church fellowship, “with the greater excommunication, for some grievous and notorious offence, “and no man being able to testify of his repentance,” (Canon 68)—and felo-de-ses—or self-murderers, judicially pronounced to have been in their senses while putting an end to their existence—all these are to be buried with “the burial of an ass,” (Jer. xxii. 19)—and their souls are significantly “consigned to the bitter pains of Eternal Death.”

All other persons may be canonically interred by the Church of England—they may be infidels, Socinians, Methodists, Independents, Episcopalians, Catholics; or drunkards, swearers, debauchees, sabbath-breakers, gamblers, thieves, cheats, misers, persecutors, wretches dying in beer shops, brothels, and pugilistic encounters, &c.;—still they are all explicitly pronounced righteous and sent to everlasting life. The following language is read at the grave of every one of them:—

*“Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God of his great mercy to
“take unto himself the soul of our dear brother here departed, we therefore
“commit his body to the ground. . . . in sure and certain hope of the resur-
“rection to eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . We give thee
“heartly thanks that it hath pleased thee to deliver this our brother out
“of the miseries of this sinful world: beseeching thee that it may please
“thee, of thy gracious goodness, shortly to accomplish the number of thine
“elect, and to hasten thy kingdom. . . . We beseech thee, O Father. . . . that
“when we depart this life we may rest in” Christ “as our hope is this
“our brother doth,” &c.*

No words could more distinctly express the confidence of the minister in the real piety and future happiness of the departed—(of whom all this is spoken)—even when feeling fully convinced that he died an infidel and is gone to perdition. He designates him a “dear” Christian “brother”—blesses God for having called him “out of the miseries of this life” and taken his soul to himself in “glory.”—“A sure and certain hope” is expressed that the body shall rise “to eternal life” through the merits of Jesus Christ. When the most holy person in the parish is interred, and when the priest has not the least doubt of his piety and everlasting welfare, he employs only *the same* language—for stronger could hardly be used were he officiating at the grave of the Apostle Paul himself.

Such, indeed, are the expressed sentiments of the clergy on this occasion, that no man, who accredits what is asserted at the grave, can for a moment doubt that the party interred is eternally safe. He must, in fact, believe the Prayer-book to be a great lie, or the minister a great hypocrite, if he have any serious doubt of the salvation of his departed neighbour or relative.

SECOND.—THE PERNICIOUS INFLUENCE OF THIS BURIAL SERVICE.

The enlightened Christian reader will fully agree with me that a service more calculated to do extensive and irreparable mischief to the souls of men could hardly have been devised, even had the great enemy of our race dictated it for the express purpose of advancing his own iniquitous projects in the earth. And there is hardly a doubt that the evils it has already effected, have been great and abiding beyond all human calculations.

I. *It encourages the most deceitful HOPES in afflicted relatives.*—Whatever may have been the creed or the conduct of their friend, up to the close of his existence; though he died without piety, faith, or any other Christian grace—or even while cursing and blaspheming the name of God—he is declared safe and happy for ever. This is done too by a professedly Christian minister—(whom they reverence for his wisdom, sanctity, and office)—in the most solemn manner—on the precincts of the grave—and to parties anxious to lay hold on any intimation favourable to the supposed future happiness of a dear and valued relative. And, hence, instead of being warned and benefitted by this fearful and instructive providence, they naturally hope the best for the lost, and, at least, equal happiness for themselves—whatever be their own moral and religious condition.

II. *It guarantees IMPUNITY to the most ungodly mortals.*—However wedded to their sins, negligent of religion, and vicious in their lives, this service, (as necessarily construed and applied by themselves) indirectly assures them that their salvation is certain—for men equally vile have been repeatedly pronounced safe and happy by it. They have only to be assured that they have been duly baptized—to keep clear of the greater excommunication—and not to cut their own throats while perfectly sensible—and all will be right at last! This service is the prolific parent of practical ANTINO-MIANISM—which promises its deluded victims eternal safety and joy, notwithstanding the wickedness of their hearts and lives. Perhaps, nothing beside can be found, in any sect or sentiment, more manifestly deceitful to the souls of men—or destructive of godliness in the world.

III. *It cherishes INFIDELITY and contempt of the Christian religion.*—When shrewd unconverted lookers-on attend the funerals of the state-worship, and witness the good and the bad, the vilest sinner and the devoutest saint, equally in favour—treated, spoken of, and buried alike—what can they infer from such manifestations, but that the whole scheme of Christianity is a delusion and cheat, and that the ministers thereof are a set of the most arrant hypocrites and knaves!! When they hear what is called an evangelical priest—a learned fellow of a college—a successor of the apostles—or the assumed counterpart of the first disciples of Christ—a man professedly more holy and consistent than his orthodox brethren—denouncing hell and damnation on his congregation for some ordinary violation of the laws of God or of the church, and then hear the same person at the grave sending the most impenitent wretch to heaven—what their conclusions must be, the reader may easily guess! Again, when they hear the church bigot IN THE PULPIT anathematize all methodists and dissenters

as infidels, schismatics, and apostates—doomed to eternal perdition; and, AT THE GRAVE, designate them his dear brethren in Christ, and pronounce them safe for ever—they can only conclude that religion is all a farce and unworthy of their serious adoption.

IV. *It virtually pronounces the truth of God TO BE A LIE.*—The Holy Scriptures repeatedly and most positively declare that the unregenerate, the unbelieving, and the unrighteous, shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the priest, at the grave, LIKE SATAN IN PARADISE, gives the lie to Jehovah, by assuring the spectators that such shall surely be saved. And he has the impious impertinence to thank God for doing what he secretly believes God has not done at all!! The fear of perdition, which the holy oracles are designed to inspire, is destroyed by the state-church; and the check which divine warnings are calculated to give to iniquity, this church wickedly takes out of the way. Hence, we have the Prayer-book against the Scriptures—and the national priest against the Almighty. The effect is visible in the generally cherished notions that all men are saved, and that a course of piety or sin terminates in the like results—and, hence, the wicked and impenitent in general so ardently cleave to the state-church, which is sure to send them to heaven when they die!!

1. A WORD TO THE CHURCH CLERGY.—Quit the church where such a sinful compromise of Christian principle and duty is inevitable—make no excuses. Your duty, as men of God, is clear. The evil you cannot remedy or explain away—and remember that this is only one of many which you are compelled to sanction and diffuse. I wonder that the man who regularly uses the burial service can walk the streets, or show his face in honest and Christian company! One act less flagrantly antichristian than this would, in most cases, render the dissenting minister despicable in the eyes of his flock! You are not warranted to do the least evil that good may come.

2. A WORD TO UNCONVERTED PEOPLE.—Do not form your estimate of the Christian religion from the Burial Service of the national Church, nor from any peculiarity in it. The gospel scheme, from turret to base, is perverted and destroyed by it. Examine the holy writings, and compare the creeds and worship of existing denominations with the professed model and statue book of all—and, whatever party you may join, YOU WILL NEVER BE A CHURCHMAN.

3. A WORD TO THE CHRISTIAN.—Never bury a friend in consecrated ground, where the Prayer-book service is used, if it can be possibly avoided. Though you may feel fully assured that he was pious, and is safe for heaven—you are bound not to encourage or countenance a system so delusive to the souls of mankind. He that says “God’s speed” to what is wicked, becomes criminal, by participation in the iniquity.—IT WERE MORE HONOURABLE AND BECOMING A REAL DISCIPLE OF CHRIST TO BE BURIED WITHOUT ANY FUNERAL RITES AT ALL THAN WITH THE DELUSIVE SERVICE OF THE ESTABLISHMENT!!

4. A WORD TO DISSENTERS.—Allow me to congratulate you on an entire exemption from the superstitious and impious rites of the state religion. For this you cannot be sufficiently thankful to God. Your services are simple and scriptural—and when you leave the world, it may be with the pleasing thought that your funeral will be the occasion of spiritual good and not of evil—and that, at all events, you shall have given no sanction whatever to “THE SOUL-DECEIVING BURIAL SERVICE OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.”

CHURCH OF ENGLAND

“EXPENSIVE AND RUINOUS TO THE POOR.”

By the Rev. W. THORN, Winchester.

OUR Establishment is frequently called “THE POOR MAN’S CHURCH”—conveying the impression that the support of its ministers, buildings, &c. costs them little or nothing; and that dissenting interests are very expensive to the lower classes of the community. And there are many poor people ignorant and credulous enough to believe this fallacious representation.

The design of the present tract is to undeceive such persons, and to prove that the state religion is **EXCEEDINGLY EXPENSIVE** to them. The subject involves several difficulties; nor is it easy to render it plain to unlearned individuals in the brief space of four pages; but I shall make the attempt, and hope to succeed. I must premise two things :—

1. That the poor among congregational dissenters pay little or nothing directly or remotely to support dissenting ministers or worship. Free and comfortable seat-room is provided for them, their children are baptized, thanks are returned after child-birth, and their young people (in most instances) are married, without any fee to their pastors. And in nearly every chapel a fund is provided to assist them in time of need. And,

2. That so incompetent and heterodox are most of the national clergy, and so antichristian and pernicious are many parts of the services and sacraments of the church (according to many high church writers themselves,) that if they really were free, they are entirely worthless—and genuine Bible Christians would rather be taxed for **NON-ATTENDANCE**, than for regular **CONFORMITY**.

FIRST.—*I shall notice the amount and payers of the income of the State-church in England and Wales.*

The amount of the revenues of the church has been variously estimated. Interested parties have made them high or low just as it suited their purpose at the moment—from 12 to 4 millions a year. I shall take the medium, and set them down at *eight millions*—a sum unquestionably under rather than above the truth, as I am prepared to prove from most valid evidence.

I shall assume also, that all the property and income of the church are national—as much so as our crown lands or assessed taxes; that the church, not being an incorporated body, cannot possess property any more than a regiment of soldiers; and that the state might legally and constitutionally seize on and apply all its wealth to any civil or secular purposes.

And, further, that were this enormous sum applied to state uses, it would cause a reduction of taxes to an equal amount. And as the poor husbandman and mechanic are now compelled to pay indirectly their full share of our national expenditure, such a reduction would greatly relieve them; for much lighter duties would be levied on the taxable articles they daily use.

Supposing the population to be 16,000,000, and the saving £8,000,000; each individual would have to contribute 10s. or each family of six persons £3 per year, less to the state than at present. Consequently the church

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does indirectly cost them 10s. per head, or about £3 per family every year—sums sufficient to obtain many comforts they cannot now enjoy.

Even conceding that a state-paid priesthood was necessary—which it is not—the agents at present employed are needlessly numerous, and their stipends, on the whole, far too high. Six thousand ministers properly located with £300 a year each, for all expenses, (the average incomes in the Scottish kirk,) would be amply sufficient for all the conformists in the kingdom. By such a reduction of superfluous agency and expenditure, the public, and especially the poor, would be relieved from a burden of full *six millions* per annum—or 7s. 6d. per head—or about 45s. per family. Indeed, the average salaries of the clergy, who do nearly all the ministerial work of the church, is considerably under £150. The rest goes to the *Gentlemen* parsons of the establishment—to the great injury of the lower classes. But my proposition is capable of a still more simple and striking illustration. I shall therefore consider—

SECONDLY.—*The effect of the tithe system on the comforts of the poor.*

I. *The following articles are titheable by law.*—"Corn of all descriptions, "hay, first and second crops, turnips, potatoes, peas, beans, clover, cinque-foil, vetches, rape-seed, fern, heath, furze, broom, wood, underwood, "branches of timber wood, all wood cut under twenty years of age, hops, "apples, garden plants and herbs, honey and wax, milk or cheese, lambs, "calves, colts, pigs, hens, geese, ducks, swans, turkeys, profits of corn- "mills, and of fish, copper, tin, coal, iron, and lead mines, &c.

II. *The state-clergy claim a tithe of the produce of all these articles,* raised, reared, or dug in the country—without expending a shilling upon them in capital, labour, or rent. They do not demand a tenth part of the land, nor a tenth part of the net profits of the cultivator; but a tenth part of the gross produce of the soil, &c.; as one shock of wheat out of every ten; one ton of hay out of every ten; or one sack of potatoes out of every ten; raised at the sole expense of the husbandman. And if they do not receive these productions in kind, they will have their value in money, and often considerably beyond it.

III. Here it may be proper to remark, that *tithe is not in reality a tax upon land, but on the outlay and labour of the cultivator.*—Land uncultivated or not used, mines not worked, wood not cut, and wool on the sheep's back, pay no tithe at all. They are like houses unoccupied, which pay no assessments or national taxes. The soil is but the instrument by which tithe is produced at the expense of the husbandman.

IV. In consequence of abstracting a tenth part of the produce of the land from the farmer, *he has only the other nine parts to dispose of in the market*—from the proceeds of which he must pay his rent, interest on invested capital, taxes of various kinds, wages of servants, the keep of cattle, and the expenses of his family. He must, therefore, obtain such a price from them as shall enable him to meet all these demands, or he must *soon be ruined—cease to carry on his business—or suffer the farm to be*

left uncultivated—or, in other words, he must get as much for those nine parts of his produce as the competition for land, and in the disposal of goods in the market, would allow him for the whole ten, were the tithe system totally abolished.

V. It is not material to my argument *whether all or only half the farms in the country are titheable, or whether half or all the tithes go to the clerical proprietor.*—The effect will be the same. Prices must be kept up a tenth higher, if they exist only in one farm out of three, than they would be were none levied in the kingdom. For it is a universally admitted fact, *that the tithed lands regularly fix the marketable value of agricultural produce.* This must be vended at a high price to keep the soil in cultivation; and the cultivators of land, free of tithes, will not take less for their goods than others are obliged to obtain, in order to meet necessary expenses and secure a living. Hence, with our ample means of transit, the higher prices are universally maintained, and the poor, in every town and city of the kingdom, are thus heavily taxed to uphold the parliamentary church.

VI. Now the question arises, do the farmers pay their workmen proportionably higher wages on account of the extra dearness of provisions occasioned by this tithe taxation? I answer, not in the smallest degree. The competition observable in trade and commerce is always carried into labour. *An over supply of hands, which we have in this country, will invariably reduce their wages to the lowest scale of a bare subsistence.* Their wages are *seldom or never regulated by the price of food, but by the competition for work.* Besides, the tithe system prevents many worthy agriculturalists from equitably remunerating their servants as they deserve. The clergy take so much from the public stock that they have by far too little left for their poor labouring neighbours.

VII. The natural and necessary result of the tithe system is, that the consumers of titheable articles, of which the poorer classes form a very great proportion—*have to pay, at least, a tenth more than they would have to do, if this tithe system had no existence, and without receiving any increased wages to meet the evil.* It makes bread, meat, vegetables, &c. dear in proportion to the amount the state clergyman abstracts from the cultivator of the soil of the country.

VIII. *The influence of this tithe-tax on mechanics, artisans, commerce, and trade,* is equally injurious to their prosperity. By rendering provisions dearer by a tenth than they ought to be, the work-people must have higher wages than they otherwise would—or starve outright. To pay these the manufacturer must charge higher for his goods, or cease to carry on his concerns. The result is, that the *poor consumers at home are thereby charged more for their clothes and furniture;* and their employers are undersold in foreign markets, to the frequent bankruptcy of their business, and often throwing thousands of work people out of employ. In addition to this, so much money of the poor goes in bread, potatoes, and other absolute necessities of life, that they have little or none left to purchase groceries and other little comforts—to the serious injury of tradesmen in general.

IX. The following table will show *the smallest sums* the poor and labouring classes are taxed at every year through the cruel and ruinous exaction of tithes. If a person spends

6 shillings a week, about 1 10 0 a year				14 shillings a week, about 3 12 6 a year			
8	"	ditto	. . 2 1 0	16	"	ditto	. . 4 3 0
10	"	ditto	. . 2 11 6	18	"	ditto	. . 4 13 0
12	"	ditto	. . 3 2 0	20	"	ditto	. . 5 4 0

and so on in proportion. In addition to which he has to pay his share of all parliamentary grants to the hierarchy, church rates, easter dues, &c.

X. Should it be objected, that "If tithes were not paid to the clergy, they would, in effect, be paid to the landlord in augmented rents"—I reply, as before stated, **THAT THE CLERICAL TITHES BELONG WHOLLY AND EXCLUSIVELY TO THE NATION AT LARGE, AND NOT TO THE LORDS OF THE SOIL;** who bought their estates subject to the impost, and paid proportionably less on account of them. Tithes were first granted to the catholic church by act of parliament in Winchester cathedral, in 855 and were subsequently transferred to the present state-church by the same power; and can be recalled and applied to secular uses whenever the legislature shall will it. If they are not paid to the clergy, they will, in effect, be given to the public consumers of taxable articles—that is, chiefly to the humbler classes.

XI. Or should it be said, that, "As all the produce of the soil, tithe included, is "thrown into the market, the abundance of supply and the competition of the sellers, "must necessarily reduce the price as low as if the clergy had no tithe at all"—I answer, this is not a correct view of the principle which governs the price of agricultural goods; for how much soever may be for sale, **IT IS CLEAR THAT THE TITHE-PAYER MUST HAVE A CERTAIN HIGH PRICE FOR HIS, OR HE COULD NOT CONTINUE TO WORK HIS FARM TO ADVANTAGE, AND WOULD SOON CEASE FROM HIS LABOURS.** The only effect of selling the tithe with the other nine parts is, that the clergy, like the owners of land tithe free, get a larger sum for their portion than they would do if tithe did not exist. The consumer is in no degree benefited by it.

XII. Or should it be contended that, "In order to secure the full benefit of abolishing tithes, the corn and kindred laws must be repealed or greatly modified"—I would say, Abrogate or alter them at once. They were enacted, and have been persevered in, for **ENRICHING THE CLERGY** as much as the landlord; and the former, as a body, are as zealous in their defence as the latter—**FOR THE CHEAPER PROVISIONS ARE, THE SMALLER WILL BE THE MONEY STIPENDS OF THE TITHE PAID PRIESTHOOD.** Notwithstanding the pretended pity of the parochial clergy for the poorer classes, and the occasional distribution of coals, blankets, gruel, and tracts, they have long been the strenuous advocates of a system which bears most oppressively and disastrously upon them.

Such, in conclusion, is the effect of the church on the expenditure of the lower classes, that it **MAKES MILLIONS of them POOR, PAUPERS, AND MISERABLE;** but who, exempt from its enormous exactions, might be respectable, independent, and happy. How different the nature and operation of the tithe system under the Mosaic dispensation, I have shown in "The History of Tithes, &c." [By Biblicus.] Indeed, I have no hesitation in saying, that had the tithe of this country (however objectionable in its best form under a gospel dispensation) been applied to its original purposes (one of which was to support the poor) from the time of the Reformation till now, we should hardly have had a pauper in the kingdom.

In a word, **THE CHURCH HAS BEGGARED THE NATION—IS HALF-STARVING MYRIADS OF ITS POPULATION—AND YET IT HAS THE IMPUDENCE TO CLAIM THE HIGH AND ENVIABLE HONOUR OF BEING "THE POOR MAN'S CHURCH!!!"**

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

SUPPORTED BY

ANTICHRISTIAN AND INQUITOUS TAXATION.

By the Rev. W. THORN, Winchester.

NO genuine Bible Christian will venture to deny that the laws and arrangements of God, for supporting and extending the gospel, are absolutely perfect, and intimately connected with its stability and success; and that they cannot be repealed without a divine command, or even modified without materially injuring the cause of Christ in the world.

Now, I charge the church of England with the sin of annulling the statutes of heaven, made for the due maintenance of religion, without the slightest divine authority, and with thereby inflicting a serious wound on the cause of Christianity—persecuting the faithful disciples of the Saviour—and involving itself in the guilt of antichristian rebellion. To establish these assertions, is the design of the present paper. I assert then,—

FIRST.—*That the VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLE alone was devised and appointed by Jehovah for supporting religion.*

(1.) By the voluntary principle is meant individual liberty, (in opposition to all human compulsion,) to pay or not towards upholding or extending religious institutions—leaving men to be influenced by christian persuasion or the commands of God—whose wrath they incur by withholding the property he requires for the furtherance of religion, or by giving it to support doctrines, sacraments, and ceremonies, felt to be adverse to his revealed will.

(2.) That the Almighty has appointed this plan, and this only, no honest and competent student of the scriptures will venture to deny. That the priests and prophets of the Old Testament were thus supported, and the temples and synagogues thus built and repaired, are facts wholly indisputable. That the apostles and first ministers of the gospel, and even Christ himself, were maintained on the same voluntary principle, admits of no question. And that they practically sanctioned no other rule for sustaining religious institutions is equally obvious and certain.

(3.) Further, there is no reason to doubt that THOSE ARRANGEMENTS WERE TO BE AS LASTING AS RELIGION ITSELF—that they are as immutable as the doctrines and precepts they were designed to support—and that they cannot be destroyed, without indirectly charging Jehovah with a want of legislative wisdom, and of sufficient forethought and care for his future church.

(4.) THE SUPPORT OF THE GOSPEL IS PURELY A RELIGIOUS OBLIGATION, and comes no more within the province of the civil power, than the enforcement of faith in Christ or the spiritual worship of our Maker. And should the voluntary principle, at any time, be found deficient, through the covetousness of its adherents, the government has no more right to make them pay more, than to love God more, or to put a greater trust in his salvation. Finally, there is no instance recorded in the holy writings of religious princes compelling their subjects to pay tithes and offerings to God; or of religious people subscribing voluntarily to maintain principles and worship which they regarded as unscriptural or iniquitous.

SECONDLY.—*That the COERCIVE PRINCIPLE alone is adopted and appointed for supporting the Church of England.*

I shall not here treat of the extent of the revenues of the clergy—of the unequal incomes they receive—of the voluntary efforts made by the members of the church—nor of the endowments it may be supposed to possess—if any such exist distinguishable from national property—but of the notorious fact, that every subject of

the realm is indirectly or directly taxed, to a large amount, by the civil power, to meet the demands of the episcopalian sect.

(1.) *It is certain that the state-religion, of itself, knows nothing of the voluntary principle*—which is scouted and repudiated by its laws, as alien from its constitution. It apportions its claims on every individual, and those are enforced, in the same way, as the collectors of assessed taxes and customs enforce the revenues of the state. The officers of justice call for ecclesiastical dues; and failing to receive them in cash, they seize your goods or imprison your person—inflicting much greater and more protracted punishment, than they would for refusing to give Cæsar his dues, or for committing a highway robbery. You may plead conscience, the fear of God, or the prior application of your money to support what you believe to be the truth; but excuses are vain—your money or your liberty, is the cry and the motto of the Church of England.

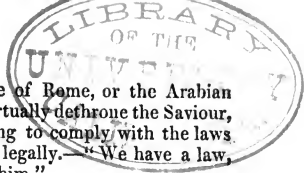
(2.) *The direct taxation* for the church, consists of rates and dues, which every householder is liable to pay, or to be punished for his refusal. The amount of this cannot be much less than a million a year. But *the indirect taxation* is by far the greatest and the most oppressive to the public. It consists of tithe—causing a higher price for every thing you eat, or wear, or use, without any corresponding increase of wages or income on account of it. By this impost you are taxed from ten to twenty per cent. on all the money you spend in the country. To this, may be added immense parliamentary grants—for building churches (with drawbacks of duty on building materials)—for supporting colleges,—and maintaining ministers, belonging to the state persuasion;—these are levied on all classes and denominations of the people—chiefly, in proportion to the extent of their families and the amount of their daily consumption. One can neither eat, nor drink, nor wear clothing, nor rent a house, without being compelled to subscribe indirectly or directly to the Church of England.*

In a word, the church is no less supported by coercive taxation than the state—and that the latter is sustained by compulsory enactments, no man in his senses will deny. And while this is right and necessary in civil concerns, it is both sinful and needless in religion.

THIRDLY.—*That this method of supporting the Church of England, is ANTICHRISTIAN AND INIQUITOUS.*

The evils of this system are not mitigated, nor the sins of compliance with it diminished, by the fact, THAT THIS METHOD OF SUPPORTING THE CHURCH HAS BEEN ENACTED BY THE SUPREME LEGISLATIVE BODY IN THE NATION. That assembly has no more right to annul the laws of God, or to make men support the gospel, than a conclave of village politicians; or than it has to forbid the worship of the Deity—the observance of the sabbath—or faith in the atonement. And Christians, who regard Christ as the only legislative head of the church on earth, and his laws as their exclusive guide in all religious concerns, are no more obliged to obey

* The small sum of 1,700 l. per annum, originally paid out of the privy purse for poor dissenting ministers of the Presbyterian, Independent, and Baptist denominations, and now voted by parliament, is all that Protestant Dissenters in England and Wales receive of the public money; and against this yearly grant Nonconformists in general have often expressed their decided objection.



kings and parliaments in spiritual matters, than the pope of Rome, or the Arabian imposter. A contrary doctrine, fully carried out, would virtually dethrone the Saviour, and brand every Christian martyr as a rebel, for refusing to comply with the laws of parliament. Even the Son of God was put to death legally.—“We have a law, and by that law he ought to die.” “And they crucified him.”

I. IT IS EXCEEDINGLY INQUITOUS.—(1.) It prevents church people, as such, from performing one of the most binding and delightful of Christian duties—to give voluntarily and cheerfully to the cause of God, as he has been graciously pleased to prosper them in life. They have no choice or liberty in the matter. So much is exacted, and so much must be paid. If they would indulge their religious charities, they must subscribe to some other object, or beyond what the church exacts of them.

(2.) It compels multitudes of poor people to pay to the church, who, on the score of poverty, ought, in justice and mercy, to be exempted—and from whom dissenting churches would be ashamed to receive a single penny. As shown, in a previous paper, the daily labourer, and the half-starved mechanic, are charged considerably more for their food, clothing, &c. than they would be, were the support of the church placed on scriptural principles. Indeed, the poorer classes, being far the most numerous, are compelled to bear the chief burden of the hierarchy—while the clergy, in general, encourage *high prices of bread, &c.*—as these make their incomes much larger than low ones. [See No. 13.]

(3.) On the other hand, it prevents thousands, in easy or affluent circumstances, from contributing as much to the cause of religion as they would do, were the whole left to their own benevolent dispositions. It is frequently observed, that if you exact a pound of a person for the support of the gospel, he will give no more; though he would have contributed ten or twenty had no such antichristian levy been made on his resources. His feeling of generosity is blunted—the habit of meeting only legal demands is formed—and, consequently, the loss to the cause of Christ is often very considerable.

(4.) It is also *calculated* to make people, of no religious feelings or professions, dislike christianity much more than they would otherwise do, and it prevents their giving its claims a fair and candid consideration. They are chafed and provoked, by perpetual demands on their means, for sustaining and extending what they neither value nor believe; for which they are unconscious of receiving any good in return; and by which they conceive no benefit is conferred upon their fellow creatures. And when they witness the money extorted from them, given, in many cases, to men grossly inconsistent in their conduct, and pampered by it into superciliousness, their dislike of religion, however unreasonable, increases with every such renewed appeal to their persons and pockets.

II. IT IS HIGHLY DISGRACEFUL to the church itself.—(1.) It places the clergy in a most disreputable position. For this coercive species of support, in effect, says, that though gentlemen of other profes-

sions may safely stand upon their office, character, and abilities; and though ministers of the chapel and, indeed, of every land where establishments do not exist, obtain, upon the whole, adequate support, the clergy of the church of England would be beggars and starve, if not paid at the point of the sword!

(2.) It also proceeds on the assumption that all the real friends and advocates of the venerable church of England—though so many and so wealthy, compared with any other single denomination, are too miserly, or too little influenced by love to God and to their pastors, to maintain their system without getting large and perpetual contributions from dissenters—who have also their own cause to support, and from unbelievers—who care not a straw about them. This is their own cutting libel on our lauded apostolical religion!

(3.) It is the cause of introducing vast numbers of ignorant, unconverted, and every way unsuitable, clergymen into the church—to mislead and ruin the souls of men, and to bring disgrace on the whole system. Had the voluntary principle been adopted by episcopalians, not one in ten of the present bishops and clergy would have entered the ministry, or retained their offices a single year. As matters now stand, almost any person, with good connexions, may become a priest; and, then, with insufferable hauteur, stupidity, and folly, may bid defiance to his flock, and fleece them to the skin according to law!

III. *It is a direct PERSECUTION OF DISSENTERS.*—Persecution is of two kinds—preventing men from propagating what they believe to be divine truth—and compelling them to disseminate what they regard as heresy. The church does both—but now chiefly the latter.

(1.) It compels Nonconformists to support two religious systems instead of one; at least such must be the case, if they would worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences.

(2.) It robs many humble Dissenters so thoroughly, that they can afford little or nothing, towards upholding what they believe to be true, or to maintain the ministry they prefer and duly attend.

(3.) It pilfers the seceding public of several millions a year, which, applied towards their own institutions, would render them efficient far beyond their present condition.

(4.) It takes their property to build its churches and pamper its clergy, and then looks with contempt upon the meeting-house and its minister, as appertaining to a poor and undignified communion.

(5.) It makes them support men in the parish pulpit, whose doctrines they regard as unscriptural and whose conduct is often immoral; for it seems that multitudes of the clergy are “leading the souls of men to perdition.”—RECORD.

(6.) It compels them, at least indirectly, to sustain and extend baptismal regeneration, baptismal sponsors, confirmation, absolution, the burial service, union of church and state, the orders of the priesthood, fixed forms of prayer, and many other heretical and pernicious ordinances and ceremonies, which they most heartily detest and condemn.

Now, if this be not religious persecution, there never was any such thing in the world; and every voluntary abettor of it, every practical member of the church, and every priest supported by such a taxation, is, whether sensible of it or not, an aider and encourager of persecution! I challenge any objector to disprove the truth of this serious allegation.

CHURCH PATRONAGE: OR TRADING IN THE SOULS OF MEN.

By the REV. W. THORN, Winchester.

WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF A CLERGYMAN OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

"Not only 'slaves,' but the 'souls of men' are mentioned as articles of commerce; which is "beyond comparison, the most infamous of all traffics that the demon of avarice ever devised; "even almost infinitely more atrocious than the infamous slave trade. Yet it is far from uncommon. . . . Nor has the management of CHURCH PREFERMENTS and many other things been "any better than trafficking in souls; and it would be highly gratifying to Protestants, if they could "say that this merchandise has been peculiar to the Roman Antichrist, exclusively their guilt, "and that none among us were 'partakers of their sins.'"—REV. T. SCOTT, on REV. xviii. 13.

FIRST.—I SHALL SHOW WHAT IS MEANT BY CHURCH PATRONAGE, OR "TRADING IN THE SOULS OF MEN."

I. CHURCH PATRONAGE consists in the power of certain political officers, ecclesiastical dignitaries, private gentlemen, and public bodies, to appoint clergymen to the cure of souls, with the stipends and emoluments thereto attached. It is the reverse of that popular choice, by which the members of Independent congregations elect their own bishops and deacons. In the former case, the parishioners have no vote or voice at all; and in the latter, the sole right of election is vested in the hands of the people, who hear the preacher and pay his salary.

The possessors of patronage in the parliamentary church may be learnt from the following statement: upwards of 5000 preferments are in the gift of the gentry, nearly 4000 in that of the bishops, 1000 in that of the state, 800 of collegiate chapters, and about 200 of public bodies; while, in 64 cases only, the people elect their own teachers. From this statistical account, Ireland and Scotland are excluded.

This right of presentation is connected with certain civil and ecclesiastical offices, which are mostly obtained through political partizanship and intrigue; or it is purchased by persons of wealth, either to sell again at a profit, or to bestow on some favourite, or for the purpose of portioning off the junior male and female branches of their families.

The moral and religious character of the persons, who may obtain and exercise the right of patronage, is of no importance in the eye of the law. They may be Catholics, Churchmen, or Dissenters—Jews, Socinians, Infidels, rakes, or fools—or any thing you please. If they can get into the requisite offices, or command a good round sum of money, they may legally nominate the spiritual guide of almost every parish in the kingdom. In fact, the chief management of the state-church is not in the hands of real christians, but of mere and avowed men of the world.

Nor is there any law to prevent such patrons from conferring several benefices on the same individual—and this is frequently done—many clergymen having from two to half a score preferments at the same time. "One "half of the livings in the kingdom, and those of the richest kind, are held "in double and treble forms; the pluralists, in nine cases out of ten, being

“men, whose entire income ranges above £2,500 per annum. *Mr. Acaster.* And, as we shall presently see, the clerical nominees may be persons morally, physically, and religiously disqualified to preach with propriety and success.”

II. CHURCH PATRONAGE and TRADING IN THE SOULS OF MEN are virtually the same thing.—This Mr. Scott asserts—and it will further appear if you consider that the cure of souls is transferred to the patron with the glebe, tithes, offerings, and other worldly goods and chattels, appertaining to the ecclesiastical benefice. They are all made over to the purchaser in one undivided lot—and he that purchases, or becomes possessed of, the latter, has a legal right also to the former.—It is not unlike buying an estate in Russia or South America with all the serfs or slaves upon it—though, in criminality, it is “almost infinitely more atrocious.”

You cannot literally trade in souls as you can in ‘horses and chariots;’ but you can so traffic in them as to commit their oversight and keeping to a third party—who may feed or starve them—misguide or wisely direct them—employ them as servants of sin or disciples of Christ. Patronage places them under that management and controul which, as far as human agency is concerned, leads them to heaven or conducts them to hell. And if this be not trafficking in human souls, there is no such thing in the world.

In this merchandise and patronage, the people thus made over to the clergy have no voice in the concern—any more than if they were as many sheep or oxen. They are not consulted, and their well-being seldom taken into the account, in this bargain and sale affair. As a colonel is placed over a regiment, without consulting the soldiers, so a clergyman is preferred to the spiritual dominion over the souls of the parishioners, without obtaining or asking their consent.

SECONDLY.—THE SIN and EVILS of CHURCH PATRONAGE or TRADING in the SOULS of MEN. The principal of these I shall briefly mention.

I. *It is unscriptural, and renders void many portions of divine truth.*—The Aaronic priesthood was hereditary, and all the priests divinely appointed. The prophets were raised up of God and their labours and localities fixed by him. In the New Testament, even the Apostles simply recommended certain individuals to the favourable attention and reception of churches, previously formed by the labours of others. Patronage, or trading in human souls, was unknown to the churches before the coming of Christ, and for several ages after.

The admonitions of the apostles to the saints—to ‘take heed what they heard,’ to ‘try the spirit’ of the minister, and to forsake all who perverted the truth of the gospel, are quite inoperative in the Church of England. A minister appointed by his patron, whatever be his sentiments or conduct, must be heard and submitted to by the people. To leave his ministry is considered sinful—and even to cross the borders of his parish, to attend on some other clerical nominee, is against the laws of the church.

Where churches had not been formed, the brethren and apostles frequently sent one of their number to commence the good work. But here there was no church patronage, because there was neither church nor in-

come. In the same way, good men are now sent as missionaries into our dark villages and distant countries. Here, again, there is no patronage, because there is no church nor local income. And as for "making merchandise of the souls of men," it is unknown among Protestant Dissenters—and repudiated by them as the cruel work of antichrist.

II. *It treats all the parishioners as religiously ignorant, careless, or enslaved.*—However *intelligent*, they are not supposed to be capable of judging for themselves, as to the qualifications and fitness of a christian minister, and as if all the wisdom, in such cases, were monopolized by the, perhaps, infidel patron—Or, however *holy* and zealous, they are esteemed too careless and miserly to elect one of their own free choice; and, therefore, one must be imposed—Or, however *wealthy* and independent, they are regarded as having no rational liberty for such an act; and must be treated as children, heathens, or vassals.

In many, and, indeed, in most other respects, Englishmen are regarded as free, and qualified to judge and act for themselves. They may elect their own members of parliament, corporate officers, and county coroners—their own tradesmen, physicians, solicitors, or scientific professors; for doing which they are certainly as ill qualified as for choosing their own spiritual guides. To be consistent, we should have a patronized doctor, lawyer, and shopkeeper in every parish—to be paid by taxation like the parish priest!

It is a curious circumstance, that while a statesman, bishop, or gentleman, may be deemed qualified to nominate any clergyman to preach to *other* statesmen, bishops, or gentlemen, he is not, as a parishioner, competent to choose who shall preach to himself in the parish church. They impose parsons on one another. A sends a clergyman to preach to B, and B returns the compliment to A. It is all per accident that a man is the patron of the parish in which he resides.

III. *It involves a gross insult and injury on all who do not belong to the episcopalian sect.*—The parish priest is appointed to the cure of the entire population, because, in the merchandise of souls, the patron purchased them all. Though half of them never enter the church doors, and have pastors of their own, whom they both hear and support; yet are they included in the deed of bargain and sale, equally with those who professedly sanction the system, and tamely submit to the disgrace it inflicts upon them; and they are all compelled to pay their quotas to this obtruded clergyman.

The ecclesiastical nominee fails not, on his part, to announce his universal mastership of all the souls in his parish, of every rank and denomination. He pays his courteous pastoral visits to dissenting families, conceives he is doing his duty, and doing them honour and kindness by calling them a part of his legal flock. He is sorry they do not attend his church, and would be very happy to see them return to their proper fold. He hints that the dissenting preacher is an intruder into his parish, and ought not to be encouraged. This insufferable impertinence is the natural result of the wholesale trading in the souls of men in the state-religion.

This nominee, of perhaps some old lady, unconverted bishop, or profligate chancellor, forgets that the position of a dissenting minister is far more

honourable and christian-like than his own. To be chosen and supported by a body of people, even if humble and few, supposes a good character, talents for his work, and diligence in his calling; while the parson, imposed on a parish, is not received, because he has even one of them.

IV. *It inflicts most serious and well-merited evils on the Church of England.*—While church and state are united, or while a political establishment of religion exists, patronage will and must form a part and parcel of the system—to separate them is practically impossible. [Witness Scotland!]

1. IT PUTS A BAN OF INCOMPETENCY AND DISGRACE ON THE GREAT BODY OF CONFORMISTS. HOWEVER ENLIGHTENED, PIOUS, AND WEALTHY THEY MAY BE, they are regarded as mere passive creatures, under the domination of the priesthood—having only to submit to his dictation and pay his salary. Hence the indifference which most church people display in reference to the gospel. The whole scheme tends to keep them quiet and unconcerned about it.

2. IT HAS THE EFFECT IN GENERAL OF KEEPING THOSE MEN DESTITUTE OF BENEFICES WHO ARE THE BEST QUALIFIED TO FILL THEM.—Those who cannot so demean themselves as to act the sycophant to the bishop or patron—who cannot dance attendance at the door of the rich—which few men of mind and independent spirit can do—or who have not money enough to buy a living—may wait long for a presentation. And if they obtain a curacy they are half starved, and treated as underlings and lacqueys by their master, the sleek and haughty rector of the parish.

3. IT ADMITS AND EXHIBITS THE MOST EXTENSIVE SYSTEM OF FAVOURITEISM OF ANY THING IN THE COUNTRY.—In the profession of the law, medicine, music, arts, arms, manufactures, trade, &c. there must be competency in the candidate for his duties before patronage can be effectively exercised. A fool will not do—nor will a knave very long. But in the church it may be exercised with scarcely any restriction, and to almost any extent—for who is not qualified to do the work, or fill the office of a minister of the establishment? Hence,

4. IT INTRODUCES THE MOST UNWORTHY MEN INTO THE STATE PULPITS.—Hear a high-church organ: “The office of a clergyman is sought by the very last people who ought to receive it. However brainless or profligate a youth may be, he still “must enter into holy orders, because his friends have property or interest in the “church. Perhaps they select him first, in preference to his brothers, because he “happens to be the dunce of the family.”—BLACKWOOD’S MAG. This doctrine is too commonly exemplified in the state-religion.

5. IT OPERATES MOST ADVERSELY TO THE GOOD CONDUCT OF THE CLERGY WHILE IN THE CHURCH.—Their independence of their flocks, not only renders them arrogant, but protects their vices. “Any man may, so far as concerns ability and character, “gain admission into holy orders. A clergyman may be destitute of religious feeling “—he may be grossly immoral—he may discharge his duties in the most incompetent “manner, and lose his flock—he may do almost any thing short of legal crime, and “still he will neither forfeit his living, nor draw on himself any punishment.”—IBID. Instances of this nature are of frequent occurrence. How different is the case among Protestant Dissenters!

6. THE CHURCH CONTAINS NO INHERENT POWERS TO COUNTERACT THE SHOCKING EVILS ARISING FROM PATRONAGE.—The patrons, as a body, are as ignorant of religion as the parishioners they provide for. The bishops, on the whole, are as bad as the priests they ordain. And in the Universities, no young men are plucked for want of piety, theology, or preaching talents. We may, therefore conclude with MR. ACASTER, that this patronage—“raises up more barriers to her improvement, than perhaps any “other single cause whatever.” AND IF IN RELIGIOUS MATTERS, EPISCOPALIANS HAD THE INDEPENDENCE AND SPIRIT OF MEN, THEY WOULD NEVER ATTEND THE MINISTRY OF A PRIEST, THUS UNSCRIPTURALLY AND UNRIGHTEOUSLY IMPOSED UPON THEM.

ENLIGHTENED CONFORMISTS

"DOING EVIL THAT GOOD MAY COME."

By the Rev. W. THORN, Winchester.

BY Enlightened Conformists, I mean those practical church people who rightly understand the doctrines, duties, and injunctions of scripture; and who frankly admit the great Protestant principle, that "The Bible only is the religion of Protestants," and ought to be the exclusive religion of all mankind.

These people have wisdom enough to perceive, and candour sufficient to allow, that there are many antichristian errors and evils in the Church of England. These are deplored and condemned by them in conversation and books, with a freedom and force never surpassed by the most ultra and fearless Dissenter in the kingdom.

They have, moreover, the honesty to concede that there are protestant nonconforming communions (the Congregational for instance) against whose doctrines, worship, discipline, government, order of officers, and methods of support, no charge can be fairly brought for departing from the laws and examples of the New Testament.

And yet these same people cleave to this reprobated church, attend its worship, minister at its altars, cheerfully support its institutions, and otherwise sanction it, as a whole, with as much diligence, devotion, and apparent approbation, as if they deemed every portion of it perfectly scriptural.

To Protestant Dissenters, who abhor double dealing and hypocrisy, especially in religious matters, such a course appears passing strange and highly sinful; and they can account for it only on the supposition that its authors vainly hope to do good by this compromise of principle, and this encouragement of what they know to be antichristian and wicked.

But, as the purest motives and the fairest prospects of doing good, can never justify the known violation of divine truth, or the slightest departure from the path of christian rectitude; the conduct of these Enlightened Episcopalians cannot be too severely condemned by us, nor too speedily reformed by themselves.

FIRST.—I SHALL MENTION A FEW "EVILS" IN THE CHURCH COMPLAINED OF BY ENLIGHTENED CONFORMISTS.—The supposed *abuses* of the system, if there be any, I shall not notice, but confine my exposition to points identified with its existence.—They condemn—

I. The absolute dominion of the civil power over the church—by which the authority of Christ and the rights of believers are virtually destroyed.

II. The system of patronage—by which congregations are prevented from electing, like the early churches, their own spiritual overseers.

III. The coercive maintenance of the church—especially compelling Dissenters to support an institution which their consciences condemn.

IV. The unscriptural orders of the clergy, their grades, and dominion over each other, and the unreasonable inequality of their stipends.

V. The facility with which ungodly young men may enter into holy orders, and the protection afforded to their subsequent delinquencies.

VI. The persecuting canons of the church, its spiritual courts, and the cruelty it frequently displays against conscientious Dissenters.

VII. The popery and foppery of cathedral worship—the drones harboured within its walls, and their sad perversion of public property.

VIII. The utter want of religious discipline—by which almost any unconverted man may enjoy all its privileges and consolations.

IX. Reading the Apocrypha in divine service, observing saints' days, and making human laws the last resort of a christian's appeal.

X. Parts of the Baptismal, Confirmation, Sacramental, Marriage, Ordination, Visitation, and Burial Services, Athanasian Creed, Catechism, &c.

These, and many other matters, forming part and parcel of the state-church, all Enlightened Episcopalians denounce as antichristian and sinful; as dishonourable to God; as making void his law; as contemning his authority; and as ruinous to the souls of men. Though every pious Conformist may not view them all in the same clear light, nor feel the evils of them in the same degree, you cannot find one who will seriously defend them, or who does not heartily wish them clean gone for ever.

SECONDLY.—I SHALL SHOW HOW ENLIGHTENED CHURCHMEN SANCTION AND SUPPORT ALL THESE “EVILS.”—I do not mean that they verbally or avowedly express their approbation of them; but that they do it much more effectually and successfully by their practice:—

I. By standing aloof from those christian communions which they are convinced contain nothing at variance with the gospel of Christ.

II. By silently or otherwise countenancing those ignorant and unrighteous persons, who rail at, and disparage, the most evangelical churches.

III. By regularly worshipping in the state sanctuary, and joining in its ordinances, ceremonies, institutions and sacraments.

IV. By educating their children in the principles of this church, and inducing their domestics to attend its services.

V. By cheerfully paying tithes, rates, and dues, to support the clergy, repair their buildings, and supply their incidental expenditure.

VI. By occasionally lauding the church, as a whole, and appearing to pride themselves on the ground of being members of it.

VII. By teaching in its schools, visiting the sick in its name, collecting money for its societies, and inviting people to attend its worship.

VIII. By officiating in its desks and pulpits, conducting its sacraments and ceremonies, and living on the produce of its endowments.

In this way, they give their sanction and suffrage to the state-church, with all the errors and evils it contains; quite as much so, as to any of the truths of scripture connected with it. Their occasional condemnation of its heresies and iniquities amounts to nothing in public estimation, com-

pared with their conformity. Nor will the orthodox clergy much heed their complaints, while they practically cleave to their cause.

THIRDLY.—THE MOTIVES BY WHICH SUCH ENLIGHTENED CHURCHMEN ARE ACTUATED IN THEIR CONFORMITY.—They knowingly “do evil *that good may come.*” This is the most favourable construction we can put on their conduct; and if they deny it, let them give us a better.

I. They imagine that, while in the church, they can pray and act with greater effect than out of it, towards removing its numerous evils!

II. Or, that were all pious people to leave the church, it would be placed in a most wretched and hopeless condition!

III. Or, that they have a wider field for doing good to the souls of men while conforming, than they could obtain as Dissenters!

IV. Or, that they should break up their valuable connexions, and produce discord and relative strife, by leaving the church!

V. Or, that dissent would be followed by losses in business, respectability, and salaries, very detrimental to them and their families!

For these reasons, and I can think of no better, enlightened episcopalians remain in the national church, and give their fullest sanction and support to all its admitted falsehoods and corruptions. They propose to do good to themselves and others by continued conformity—at least, this is their plea, and the best they can offer, in defence of their glaring inconsistencies.

FOURTHLY.—THE GREAT FOLLY AND IMPIETY DISPLAYED IN THUS “DOING EVIL THAT GOOD MAY COME.”—Whatever beneficial results might arise from such conduct—it is unjustifiable and iniquitous. It is no better than worshipping God before the altar of Baal, or knowingly blending the truths of God with the fables of superstition.

I. They strangely suppose that the best way to destroy the evils of the church, is to adopt, sanction, support, and practically applaud them!

II. They act on the universally reprobated notion, that good motives will sanctify the most unholy and disreputable actions!

III. They might, on the same principle, sanction lying and robbery, because their object was to advance the cause of God by it!

IV. Their conduct would justify all genuine protestants continuing in the Church of Rome, the more effectually to remove its numerous evils!

V. They fairly render themselves chargeable with the sin of hypocrisy and deceit in the presence and worship of God!

VI. They must live under the constant apprehension of being despised and condemned by all honest and intelligent christians!

VII. They must be sensible that the ignorant out-and-out churchman is a far more consistent person than themselves!

VIII. They must be blind or see that they professedly adopt, and are therefore answerable for, every constitutional error of the establishment!

IX. They are also chargeable with giving their suffrage in favour of all the cruel persecutions committed by the political church!

X. They will have to render to God a fearful account of all the mischief their example inflicts on their less intelligent brethren!

However severe the previous remarks, they are justly merited by the people referred to, as I believe all intelligent and upright persons will readily admit. Indeed, the man who should manifest the like hypocrisy and double dealing in political or social affairs would be trusted by no honest person, and be denounced as a disgrace to all good society.

Hence, their **PATH OF DUTY** is plain and imperative.—*They should at once and for ever quit the pulpits and pews of this avowedly corrupt denomination.* The consequences of dissenting to themselves and families, however painful and perplexing, involve no questions for them to ponder over a single hour. Let them do, (as millions, in similar cases, have done before,) come out and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and leave the issue to God, who has graciously promised to provide for all those who sacrifice their temporal good on the altar of truth.—It is, however,

OBJECTED—

I. *That “as the church contains all the essential doctrines of the gospel—in addition to the aforementioned errors—conformity is both harmless and defensible.”*—But this is to adopt the absurd apology of the *play-going public*, who assert, that though the theatre teaches many false, unchaste, and wicked notions, it also inculcates many excellent lessons on charity, virtue, and morals! Besides, Romanism contains every essential doctrine of christianity as much as the state-religion; and the enlightened catholic, might equally justify his continuance in that corrupt communion, on precisely similar grounds. And—

II. *As the 6th Article of the Church says—“Whatever is not read in Holy Scripture, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be believed;”* it is argued, that persons may openly conform to this church, without receiving or sanctioning any of its unscriptural rites or doctrines. But this is grossly erroneous.

(1.) The state-church tolerates no *private* judgment in religious matters—imperatively requiring all its ministers and members implicitly to believe—not their own interpretations of “Holy Scripture,”—but merely those given in its standard authorities.

(2.) This church further assumes that *every thing* it holds and teaches, however absurd and sinful in the view of dissenters, is perfectly agreeable to God’s word; and it takes for granted, that all practical churchmen precisely accord with its views and interpretations of Scripture.

(3.) As the adherents of nearly every other heretical christian sect profess an *equal regard* for “Holy Scripture,” and refer to its supposed sense and authority in support of all their peculiar dogmas; the objector—on his own principles—might as justly unite with the most unscriptural christian denomination under heaven, as remain in the avowedly corrupt Church of England.

THE EVILS OF TRAINING UP THE YOUNG IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

By the REV. W. THORN, Winchester.

“Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that CAUSETH TO ERR from the words of (divine) knowledge.—PROVERBS xix. 27.

THE parent who should knowingly mislead the minds of his dependent and confiding family in matters of trade, workmanship, literature or science, would be almost universally regarded as a monster, and as deserving the severest execrations. Nor would that person be deemed worthy to have children who, through neglect or ignorance, should misdirect them in any material temporal concern, or willingly suffer any one else to do it.

Yet, in the infinitely more important affairs of religion, this is done daily—and few seem to lay it to heart. Children are taught the most heterodox sentiments, and are induced to engage in the most superstitious forms of devotion; while their parents seem unconscious of any personal criminality, and the public looks on with stupid indifference or iniquitous approbation. The prevalence of this evil only will account for the impunity with which it is perpetrated.

Now, making the scriptures our exclusive test of right and wrong, I boldly assert that this great sin against God and the rising generation, is committed by all who train up their children in the principles, spirit, and practices of the church of England. And whether it be done by school or domestic tuition, by parental sanction and example, or by an enjoined attendance on the ordinances of the state-worship; the results are the same—the judgment is misled—the affections are perverted—and the spiritual procedure of the rising generation is grievously and permanently vitiated.

I am fully warranted in concluding that all young persons, duly and devoutly trained up in the state-religion, will cordially believe whatever they read, see, hear, and are taught in it, to be perfectly true and agreeable to the mind of God. And this baneful operation of the system on the youthful heart and life can be prevented or diminished only by their enlightened friends assuring and convincing the young that the parsons, the canons, the articles, and the Prayer Book, are grossly in error.

What mainly insures a blind and unsuspecting reception of the errors of the church by the young and the ignorant, is their being intimately blended with palpable and important truth; and their being also constantly sanctioned and promulgated by many learned, moral, and evangelical men. It is this which renders the state-church much more ensnaring and dangerous than it would be were its errors and evils seen alone and unmixed, and were all its ministers persons of little public repute.

Without further preface, I shall proceed to show that every youth trained up in the Church of England, and upon whose mind the sentiments, laws, maxims, orders, sacraments, ceremonies, &c. are duly and favourably impressed, by school or domestic instruction, parental example, or personal attendance, is directly or indirectly, but most effectually, taught the following ungodly and pernicious notions:—

I. *To make impracticable promises*—by witnessing baptismal sponsors, at the bidding of the priest, and in a Christian sacrament, making the most solemn vows to do what God never commanded, what cannot be done, and what few ever attempt to accomplish.

II. *To undervalue the sanctity of truth*—by seeing children in church schools, who never had any sponsors at all, compelled to assert that their Godfathers and Godmothers (both in the plural!) gave them their names—which is a direct falsehood.

III. *To regard the authority of Christ as inferior to that of the state*—by witnessing many ordinances and ceremonies ordained and enforced in the national church, which, it is known, he never enjoined, and which are clearly subversive of various parts of the gospel economy.

IV. *To consider the Bible as an incomplete religious directory*—by observing numerous rites, founded on tradition, popish canons, royal edicts, and parliamentary laws, brought in to supply its supposed defects—and made binding on all regular conformists.

V. *To surrender the chief management of all spiritual affairs to unconverted men of every creed*—by seeing those who make no pretensions to serious conformity or to real holiness of heart and life, exercising the principal dominion in the church of England.

VI. *To yield their judgments in spiritual matters to the dictates of parliament*—by finding that whatever objections congregations may feel against the doctrines, rites, &c. of the church, they have not the least power to alter or depose them.

VII. *To reverence the state bishops and clergy as lineal successors of the holy apostles*—by finding that, however ignorant, useless, wordly, or wicked they may be, such preposterous claims are generally made and almost as generally conceded by state episcopalians.

VIII. *To lay the utmost stress on uniformity of worship, and little or none on unity of faith*—by hearing the clergy broach every creed in the state pulpits, and yet always read the same prayers and observe the same forms and ceremonies when out of it.

IX. *To attend their own parish church always and only*—whatever be the character of the priest, whether pious or profligate—Calvinist or Arminian—Trinitarian or Socinian—Protestant or Puseyite—and always to believe his doctrines—this being the law of the church.

X. *To approve of Church Patronage and trading in the souls of men*—by finding that nearly every cure in the country is bought and sold like an American slave estate—and the parson appointed over the people without their having any voice in the matter.

XI. To *sanction the official independence of the clergy*—whose congregations are compelled to pay and quietly to put up with them, whatever be their doctrines, inefficiency, or misconduct—provided they keep clear of legal crime—for this is an established law.

XII. To *adopt the compulsory maintenance of religion*—by learning that the church can be constitutionally supported in no other way—and that tithes, rates, dues, and parliamentary grants are forcibly levied on the entire population of the land.

XIII. To *prosecute and punish christians of other sects*—for refusing to support what they believe to be superstitious and sinful, and to anathematize all who do not practically accord with their peculiar dogmas—for this the canons strictly enforce.

XIV. To *assume that fixed parliamentary forms of prayer* are more edifying and scriptural than extempore supplications—as the former are provided in the church, and the latter generally condemned by conformists as improper and inefficient.

XV. To *observe sabbatically certain days every year* in memory of men, canonized as saints, whose characters were any thing but godly; and some of whom were among the greatest fanatics, hypocrites, persecutors, and tyrants the world ever witnessed.

XVI. To *believe that lord bishops have power to confer the gift of the Holy Ghost*, with authority to remit sin, on the young men they ordain to the ministry—and that this ordination is essential to constitute any man a legally or duly qualified preacher of the gospel.

XVII. To *think that good and bad men may piously and properly kneel together at the Lord's table*, and that this popish posture and this promiscuous fellowship are in agreement with the clear examples and the explicit sentiments of the New Testament.

XVIII. To *regard all children christened by the clergy as then and there regenerated by the Holy Ghost*—as justified, elected, sanctified, and saved—and as requiring no subsequent regeneration in the present world—even if any other were deemed possible.

XIX. To *submit to prelatical confirmation as scriptural and beneficial*—as placing youth in a state of personal responsibility—as assuring them of the favour of God—and as qualifying them to receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper.

XX. To *suppose that the bishop's reading a few prayers in a building or burying ground*, renders them so holy, that were the most godly dissenter to preach or officiate but once in either of them, they would be shockingly profaned and desecrated.

XXI. To *believe that a fully ordained priest can forgive sins upon earth as well as the Son of God*—and that a sick man, who has heard the words of the absolution from the lips of the parson, may make himself easy about his eternal salvation.

XXII. To *believe that every person canonically interred in consecrated*

earth, by a regular clergyman, is safe for heaven—God being invariably blessed for having taken the soul of a dear brother or sister out of the miseries of this life to himself in glory.

XXIII. To *believe the sign of the cross essential to baptism*—a white surplice essential for saying prayers in—different pastors essential in reading the scriptures—kneeling essential to receiving the Lord's supper—a ring essential to a wedding, &c.

XXIV. To *look upon all Dissenting ministers as unauthorised to preach the gospel*—and upon all who attend the worship of God in a meeting-house as fools, fanatics, schismatics, heretics, rebels, and hypocrites, exposed to everlasting destruction!

These are among the unrighteous sentiments which every youth, duly trained up in the state-church, naturally and necessarily imbibes; and being more congenial to his depraved nature than divine truth, they are not easily counteracted by any doctrine, precept, or practice at variance with them—and if he be not a rank fanatic, persecutor, bigot, &c. it will not arise from a want of appropriate means and motives in the church to make him one. The reasons why many episcopalians are not precisely of this character, may be found in the fact, that they are successfully taught better out of the church than in it—becoming mentally nonconformists while they practically attend its services and inconsistently avow themselves its genuine members and most zealous adherents.

That not one of the preceding heresies is inculcated among evangelical protestant dissenters, or any thing like them, is well known to all who are acquainted with their creeds, discipline, worship, official orders, methods of support, and modes of Christian procedure; and, therefore, that professedly religious parents should train up their children in the state-church, and directly or indirectly teach them all the fore-mentioned evils, while the meeting-house is accessible to them, is passing strange; and must be based on policy, prejudice, pride, or some other influence highly criminal in the sight of a heart-searching God.

Finally.—Let every parent, who is earnestly concerned for the right religious training of his children, devoutly ponder the preceding statements; and then seriously ask himself how he shall be able to answer for it at the day of judgment, if through carelessness, selfishness, ambition, or any other secular motive, he induce or permit them to learn the gross and fatal errors, and imbibe the antichristian and pernicious spirit, of the state-religion?

Let him also bear in mind, that should the parsons and their ignorant partizans, deny the truth of the foregoing allegations, and denounce the author as a calumniator of their creed and services; I am prepared and willing to prove them all, to the conviction of any intelligent and reasonable opponent. Their failing to enter into controversy with me, on their usual mean and shuffling pretences, will convince every thoughtful mind that they can more easily denounce than answer my numerous charges against their corrupt and heterodox communion.

WHY CONFORMISTS PREFER THE CHURCH TO THE CHAPEL.

By the Rev. W. THORN, Winchester.

EVERY adult professor of religion is presumed to have his particular motives for adhering to or adopting the persuasion to which he belongs, in preference to all others. His reasons may be wise or foolish, good or bad; but their existence and paramount operation are unquestionable. Thus English Episcopalians adhere to the law-church, in preference to every other body of professors, for reasons which, on the whole, appear to themselves sufficiently valid.

It should be observed, that Conformists not only prefer their own sect to those of the Socinians, Arians, and New Jerusalemites; but also to those of the Wesleyans, Baptists, and Independents—to the most evangelical as well as the most heterodox. As consistent churchmen—acting in accordance with their own creeds and canons—they as much repudiate and condemn the most scriptural and holy bodies of nonconformists, as they do the most lax and ungodly.

Now, it is worthy of inquiry, what CAN BE the motives which induce conformists to PREFER the Church of England to every other section of British Christians, and whether they are such as redound to the credit of the state-worship or of the people who make it their peculiar choice? I opine that a reply in the negative will be the result of carefully perusing the ensuing statements—the truth of which I regard as indisputable:—

FIRST.—*For what reasons enlightened churchmen CANNOT prefer Episcopal Conformity to Evangelical Dissent.*

Observe the question is not, why churchmen like the state-religion; but why they PREFER it to every other—and so prefer it, as to look with disdain upon the holiest and wisest dissenters in the country—for this, every true and consistent disciple of the church does, as a matter of course, and as the result of his church-and-state principles. Now this decided preference is given to conformity,—

I. Not because evangelical Dissenters are less attached to the Bible and all its sacred doctrines and duties than pious Episcopalians.

II. Nor because they are less protestant and Christian, both in profession and reality, than the most orthodox churchmen.

III. Nor because they are less godly, intelligent, generous, and painstaking in doing good to men's souls, than the holiest conformists.

IV. Nor because their prayers and labours are less sanctioned and blessed of God to the conversion of men, than the most zealous episcopalians.

V. Nor because the discipline, worship, and sacraments of dissenters are less accordant with the gospel, than those of the church.

VI. Nor because dissenting ministers are less qualified for their work, or less diligent in the performance of it, than clergymen.

VII. Nor because the means adopted to support dissent are less scriptural, than those employed to uphold national episcopacy.

VIII. Nor because they are less zealous, cautious, and diligent in training up the young in the fear of God, than conformists.

IX. Nor because they are less loyal, patriotic, moral, virtuous, and good members of social and domestic society, than episcopalians.

X. Nor because dissent is more bigoted, sectarian, persecuting, and intolerant, than the church established and sustained by the sword.

XI. Nor because any section of dissenters is less unanimous in sentiment or harmonious in operation, than the established sect.

XII. Nor because evangelical dissenters are more connected with Catholics, Socinians, Socialists, or Politics, than the holiest churchmen.

Whatever ignorant and malicious persons may assert, to the discredit of evangelical dissenters, all enlightened and candid churchmen will admit that, in the preceding respects, nonconformists are EQUAL to themselves, and that there is no difference in any of them to constitute a ground for preferring conformity to dissent.

It is not my present object to show how much SUPERIOR evangelical dissent is to the law-church in nearly all the foregoing particulars; but simply to state, that in the only cases which involve matters calculated to determine a wise and good man in selecting his religious party, dissent is in no degree inferior to the establishment.

Indeed, I venture to assert, and am prepared to maintain, that there is nothing scriptural, useful, or excellent in the state-system which is not found equally among Congregational Dissenters.

SECONDLY.—*What are the motives which MUST influence churchmen to prefer Conformity to Dissent?*

As the preceding list refers to all the scriptural and worthy motives which should actuate intelligent and serious persons in the choice of their religious associations, and as all these are in favour of dissent as much as conformity, and many of them a great deal more so; it is necessary to inquire after others which really determine the various classes of episcopalians to adopt the state-religion in preference to evangelical nonconformity. And as different people are influenced by different motives, I shall arrange the admirers of the state-church, with their respective reasons for preferring conformity to dissent, in the following order:—

I. *The lovers of antiquity*—because the church of England is so venerable for its age—being founded by Henry VIII. full three hundred years ago—while many of its cathedrals and churches are of a much earlier date!

II. *The admirers of uniformity*—as all church worshippers pray in the same words, bow, sit, kneel, stand, and turn beautifully alike; while in the meeting-house prayers and postures vary as each one pleases!

III. *The children of conformists*—because, should their dear church-going fathers look out of their graves and see them in a meeting-house, they would be frightened out of their ghostly senses!

IV. *The superstitious*—who think no service equal to that of their incomparable liturgy—the quaintness and antiquity of whose language give a force and energy unrivalled by modern phraseology!

V. *The mentally indolent*—as it requires little exertion to keep up with the parson and clerk in reading prayers they have read a thousand times before—while attention in the meeting-house must be great and continuous!

VI. *The romantic*—who associate all that is truly devotional with vaulted aisles, lofty spires, musical bells, lord-bishops, and splendid canonicals, which are in vain looked for in the chapel!

VII. *The semi-papist*—who sees in the church many of the peculiar and prominent features of the ancient Romish religion—and which are not to be found in the simple services of the meeting-house!

VIII. *The prejudiced*—who have been effectually taught that all dissenters are a false and bad set of people—and that every thing worthy of adoption is to be met with in the parish church!

IX. *The self-righteous*—because they are recognized and treated as Christians in the church—without being subject to the scrutiny and mortifications they would have to undergo among dissenters!

X. *The pleasure-taker*—as he may attend billiard and card tables, theatres, races, balls, wakes, &c. without losing his religious position—while dissenters would turn him out of their communion for it!

XI. *The worldling*—because he can frequently succeed better in trade, and realize more of the good things of this life, by going at least once a week to his parish church than by going to the chapel!

XII. *The niggard*—because he can generally secure a seat at church free of any direct pew-rent—and because there are not so many subscriptions and collections there, as in the meeting-house!

XIII. *The indigent*—as the clergy and their party have monopolized most of the parochial bequests, and receive large sums of public money, they can give away more bread, coals, blankets, &c. than dissenters!

XIV. *The profligate*—because dissenters are so precise that they will hold no religious fellowship with such persons, while in the state-church no such painful and invidious distinctions are made!

XV. *The fearful*—who dread the idea of incurring the enmity and persecution they might experience from the hands of their conforming relatives and neighbours by forsaking the church!

XVI. *The ambitious*—as they conceive they can get into more genteel society, be regarded as more respectable themselves, and form better matrimonial alliances, by going to church than to the chapel!

XVII. *The punctilious*—as the clergy are college-men—read prayers with a correct accent—and seldom break grammar—while dissenting ministers are known to make these matters of secondary importance!

XVIII. *The church-and-king people*—who would on no account worship in a different way from the monarch, as that would show a lack of religious deference and respect for the powers that be!

XIX. *The unsanctified penitent*—as he can have the sacrament, absolution, dying comforts, and the funeral of a saint, in the church, without conversion; while dissenters never knowingly speak peace to unrenewed hearts!

XX. *The endowed clergy*—because they are more independent of their people—of more official importance—have less mental labour—often better pay—and much brighter *worldly prospects*—than Dissenting ministers!

I have now enumerated the different characters who naturally prefer the church to the chapel, with the various motives by which they must be influenced to make such a choice. In all these cases it will be seen that the motives which cause these people to adopt or cleave to the law-church, rather than to evangelical dissent, are any thing but religiously or spiritually reputable; being such as would induce them to adopt popery, socinianism, or any other party which should hold out superior secular inducements.

I. *The REASONS why certain unprincipled dissenters have left the chapel for the church are also found in the preceding catalogue of characters and motives.* Whatever religious scruples and convictions such persons may plead, it is manifest, that they are influenced by considerations which never redound to their reputation as professors of the gospel. Their apostacy is evidently the fruit of ignorance—love of pleasure—worldly ambition—personal pique—pride—dislike to pastoral fidelity—or some other equally unrighteous motive. They never leave the Chapel for the Church through love to Christ—for the benefit of his cause—nor the spiritual improvement of their own souls—nor are they observed to grow in holiness or usefulness by such a change in their religious profession.

II. The APOLOGY frequently offered for remaining in the church, in preference to uniting with dissenters, is—“*That as the Prophets—and Christ himself—continued Members of the Hebrew Church, notwithstanding the abuses and corruptions of it by worldly and ignorant men; so it is lawful and right to continue in the church established in this country, however unscriptural and pernicious it may be.*” But this argument, in support of conformity, is grossly fallacious:—

1. It puts an iniquitous ecclesiastical system, of human device, on a par with one of divine origin and arrangement—that of Henry VIII. with that of Jehovah—and makes conformity to both alike obligatory and virtuous—which is IMPIOUS.

2. It assumes that because God had a right to establish a national church among the Jews, and to require universal conformity to it, therefore men have an equal right to set up a national Christian church, and require universal conformity to that also—which is ABSURD.

3. It considers that the mere additions, abuses, and corruptions of the perfect church of the Hebrews constituted as valid a ground for deserting it, as the CONSTITUTIONAL and INHERENT evils of our unauthorized anti-christian establishment do for our nonconformity—which is RIDICULOUS.

4. It indirectly charges our holy apostles and our own venerated reformers with folly and sin for dissenting from the established churches of their countries and times—and it tacitly reflects on the Almighty for employing instruments to effect, in the churches which he or his creatures had legally established, what we are attempting in the state-religion—which is LITTLE LESS THAN BLASPHEMOUS!!!

WHY DISSENTERS PREFER THE CHAPEL TO THE CHURCH.

By the REV. W. THORN, Winchester.

In the preceding number I have shown "Why Conformists Prefer the Church to the Chapel:" I now purpose to show "Why Dissenters Prefer the Chapel to the Church." By the CHURCH, I mean the national religious establishment of this country, with all its doctrines, canons, ceremonies, &c.; and by the CHAPEL, I mean evangelical dissent, more especially of the Congregational denomination.

It has been proved that episcopalians have not a single Christian reason or motive for adopting the state-religion in preference to that of spiritual nonconformity. It is now my object to convince the reader that pious and enlightened dissenters have numerous gospel and valid reasons for embracing nonconformity in preference to the established religion of this country.

I make this proposition with the full conviction that many of the leading doctrines of the church are truly scriptural—many of its prayers highly devotional, and many of its ministers learned, zealous, and excellent men. Beside these, however, it contains so many antichristian and pernicious errors and evils, that no person who really makes the Scriptures his sole directory in sacred matters can consistently remain within its polluted and unrighteous enclosure. As professedly bible Christians, therefore, Evangelical Dissenters prefer nonconformity to the church—

I. Because Dissenters hold and act on the principle that the Inspired Scriptures are their *sole directory* in faith, worship, and holiness—while the Church of England is chiefly based on tradition, royal edicts, and acts of parliament, which frequently contradict the word of God.

II. Because Dissenters recognize *none but Christ* as their spiritual law-giver, master, and judge—while the church regards the reigning monarch and the political parliament as its head—and whose laws are more enforced and obeyed in many instances than those of Jesus Christ.

III Because Dissenters sustain their cause only by *voluntary contributions*, as was unquestionably the case in the primitive Christian societies—while the church is supported by coercive taxation, levied on the whole population, and often enforced with cruel and infamous rigour.

IV. Because Dissenters strictly adhere to those *orders of religious officers* which (according to the early reformers) were permanently established by the apostles—Bishops and Deacons—while the Church has a dozen of different ranks and functions—and not one of them purely scriptural.

V. Because Dissenters maintain a *Christian discipline* in their communions, admitting or retaining as members those only who are regarded as pious and regenerate—while the church admits to communion alike the best and the worst, and gives them equal consolations.

VI. Because the members of Dissenting churches have the *entire management* of their own spiritual and religious affairs—while in the national church bad men have as much dominion as the good, and for the most part a great deal more.

VII. Because Dissenters employ only *spiritual weapons*—scripture and argument—in supporting and defending their cause—while the church uses those which are carnal—enforcing its demands by the sword, the terrors of a jail, and the outlawry of excommunication.

VIII. Because Dissenting churches judge of the qualifications, and *vote in the election*, of their spiritual officers, as was done in all the early settled churches—while in the establishment the right of presentation to the cure of souls is bought and sold like a commission in the army.

IX. Because Dissenting pastors must be *men of good report*—apt to teach, and versed in God's word, or they would soon lose their support—while the clergy may get into office through favouritism or money, and hold it without possessing a single appropriate qualification for their work.

X. Because Dissenting ministers, like the primitive pastors, are *dependent on their people* for support, and are never pampered into insolence by them—while the clergy are made independent, and are too generally rendered overbearing and arrogant in their demeanour.

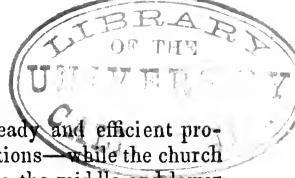
XI. Because each dissenting sect maintains a *unity of faith*, worship, order, and feeling—while the established sect is like a house divided against itself—and its ministers and members preach and profess every creed and notion promulgated in Christendom.

XII. Because Dissenters, like honest men, *only tax themselves individually* to sustain their cause—while the church compels people of every creed and condition to support their system—even those who never enter its walls, and who most conscientiously dislike its religion.

XIII. Because Dissenters lay no unscriptural stress on ecclesiastical *forms and ceremonies*, and regard as brethren those who differ from them on such minor points—while the church makes an observance of them more essential to conformity than holiness, faith, or love to Christ.

XIV. Because Dissenters do not observe *days and times* which God never sanctified—while the church has consecrated great numbers to be annually kept sacred in memory of some of the most superstitious and ungodly men the world ever witnessed.

XV. Because the various sects of evangelical Dissenters, though honestly advocating their own peculiar views, treat each other as *Christian brethren*—while the church denounces as heretics and enemies to God the best men on earth, if not of its own fraternity.



XVI. Because Dissenters have ever been the steady and efficient promoters of *civil and religious liberty* for all denominations—while the church has mostly opposed every concession of privileges to the middle and lower classes—and been the hot-bed of monopolies and oppression.

XVII. Because Dissenters have always been the hearty *advocates of education* among the young, of circulating the scriptures, and of elevating the poor by cultivating their minds—while the church, as such, is but just now awake to the subject, and that chiefly through sectarian apprehensions.

XVIII. Because God has been pleased to *sanction the labours* of Dissenters much more than those of the clergy—the expense of the means blessed to the conversion of a soul in the church being, at least, fifty times more than that incurred in the dissenting chapel.

XIX. Because Dissenters of all ranks and conditions are encouraged to *think and act* as reasonable and responsible beings—while in the church all lay persons are treated as passive dolts—to believe just what the priest says—to pay his demands—and be quiet.

XX. Because Dissent *never troubles* or intermeddles with *the state*—while the law-church is constantly keeping the legislature and country in a ferment and strife—and draining its resources to an amount which impoverishes and ruins the lower classes.

XXI. Because Dissenters *honestly profess only* what they believe to be good and true—while all enlightened and pious churchmen support and propagate many sentiments which they admit to be injurious and at variance with the plain and express will of God.

XXII. Because dissenting pastors rest their ministerial claims *on personal qualifications*, a providential call, and spiritual success—while the most graceless, useless, and incompetent clergymen base their arrogant pretensions on the absurd figment of apostolical succession.

XXIII. Because whatever evils arise in dissenting chapels, they are only such as were felt in the *first Christian societies*, and spring from persons and not from the system—while those in the church were mostly unknown in the apostolic age, and flow from the system more than from the people.

XXIV. Because Dissenters follow the apostolic example in using *extempore supplications*—while the church reads over and over every week the same prayers, which were first composed by Catholics, and then sanctioned and appointed by the royal mandate.

XXV. Because in Baptism Dissenters profess only *to dedicate children* to God in a mode which teaches the need and method of divine influence—while the church declares that every person it christens, is justified, sanctified, elected, regenerated, and saved, in or through this ordinance.

XXVI. Because Dissenters never employ Godfathers and Godmothers in baptism, nor compel persons to *perjure their souls* by promising, in the presence of God, to do what they cannot perform—while the church never publicly christens a child without them.

XXVII. Because Dissenters never perform the imposing and delusive farce of *Confirmation*, in which the church prelate assures all the young people, good and bad, that they were savingly regenerated by the Holy Ghost in baptism, and are henceforth assured of God's favour and goodness toward them.

XXVIII. Because Dissenters never *pretend to pardon* any man, penitent or not—while the clergy are supposed to be invested with this power by the gift of the Holy Ghost at their ordination; and they exercise it at the sick bed of multitudes of their poor deluded victims.

XXIX. Because in burying the dead Dissenters *make a difference* between those who die in Christ and those who evidently do not—while the church treats all alike and sends all it inter to heaven—thereby deceiving and grievously INJURING the souls of ungodly relatives and friends.

XXX. Because Dissent professedly lays upon believers no greater burden than things made *necessary by the word of God*—while the church places a heavy popish yoke on the shoulders of its ministers and members, which greatly cramps their mental energies, often pains their consciences, and sadly lessens their usefulness in the world.

Enough, I presume, has now been adduced to prove that evangelical dissenters have ample and imperative reasons for preferring the chapel to the church—and that even occasional conformity to its errors is iniquitous before God. Nor can the church present a single scriptural or spiritual advantage over the chapel to counteract, in the least degree, its own palpable absurdities and deficiencies.

It will be seen that all the preceding motives for nonconformity, in preference to union with the state-religion, are either literally scriptural, or manifestly in accordance with the spirit and genius of the gospel. They are founded on a firm adherence to the manifest will of God, and a sincere, enlightened, and earnest desire to promote the eternal welfare of mankind.

THE REPLY of certain devout episcopalians—"That enlightened and *pious church people of the present day do not believe the gross and pernicious errors of the church*"—is absurd. They all sanction, voluntarily support, and officially promulgate them—and if they do not fully believe them, they not only admit that there is a schism in the state-persuasion, but also hold themselves up to public observation as inconsistent and hypocritical conformists. Indeed, of all the members of the state-religion, *none appear in so humiliating a position as those who—while attending the church, observing its ceremonies, training up the young in its principles—yet have the simple honesty occasionally, when out of school, to confess that they do not believe scarcely half they hear, or see, or teach in their church!*

In fine, it is a remarkable feature in this controversy that the wisest, best, and most liberally minded episcopalians, are the most dissatisfied with the law-church, and the loudest in its condemnation. While, on the other hand, the wisest and holiest dissenters are the best satisfied with the scriptural constitution and services of the chapel—the most firm in their adherence to them, and the most earnest and eloquent in their praise.

THE NATIONAL CHURCH

A CREATURE AND VASSAL OF THE STATE.

By the Rev. W. THORN, Winchester.

'The Church endowed and established is the MERE CREATURE of the STATE.'—JUDGE FULLERTON.

THE most material difference between Congregational Dissent and the National Church, is that the FORMER recognizes Christ as its immediate and only lawgiver and head, and the scriptures—personally interpreted—as its exclusive statute-book and directory in all religious affairs; while the LATTER can constitutionally look no higher than to the civil powers and to acts of parliament for its government and guidance in all ecclesiastical and spiritual concerns.

A national establishment resigns its judgment and independence to the state, and virtually agrees to be directly guided and managed by its wisdom and piety; and not immediately by the oracles of Heaven, but only so at second-hand, and as far as the state expressly permits or enjoins. Consequently, however THE STATE may professedly obey Christ and respect his word, THE CHURCH can only obey the state, and look for direction to its religious views and enactments.

Many conformists—conscious of the degradation of the church thus subject to the civil powers—talk of the church of Christ being IN the Church of England, and distinct from it. They seem to think that the state has only to do with the out-works of their system—and not with its essence or internal properties. But this is a gross mistake. The civil government manages every thing doctrinal, ceremonial, and sacramental, as much as it does the method of support, and the external arrangements, of the state-religion; or as the Pope does every thing appertaining to Romanism. "His servants ye are whom ye obey." OUR head is whatever directly and authoritatively commands us in faith, worship, and action. Our supreme law is that by which we are immediately guided, and which is to us the object of ultimate appeal in our church relationship. Now, Dissenters are avowedly subject ONLY to Christ, and appeal ONLY to his word in every case of difficulty. But the Church is really under the direct and immediate domination of the civil power, which it is bound to obey in all matters of belief and religious practice.

The question is not what episcopalians, in their private capacities, or in a state of ecclesiastical disobedience and rebellion, may think, avow, or perform; but what, as honest and consistent ministers and members of the state-church, they are bound to believe and do. Many of them transgress the laws of the church—break three-fourths of its canons—declare their disbelief of some of its leading doctrines—condemn several of its rites and ceremonies—and then boast of their religious freedom and independence!! They forget that they are sheer schismatics, and exposed to the high censures of that body to which, by their attendance, they profess a cordial adherence.

FIRST.—AN EXPLANATION OF THE DOCTRINE—that *the Church of England is a Creature and Vassal of the State.*—This may be briefly given.

Henry VIII. and his parliament legally abrogated the pre-existing hierarchy of this country, established protestant episcopacy in its room, and assumed the same headship of the new church, as the pope and his council had exercised in the old. Laws were enacted, arranging and settling every particular matter appertaining to the state-religion, by civil power and authority—whose dominion in ecclesiastical and spiritual affairs was declared

to be equal to that enjoyed in things secular and political. Edward VI. carried forward the work his father had begun. Mary restored the former creed, orders, and worship—and Elizabeth re-established the so-called reformation. And from that period to the present our kings and queens have been supreme heads of the law-church, and taken the complete and uncontrollable oversight of it—the clergy and other episcopalians, as such, having no more rule in the matter, than the army, navy, or police has in making the laws which regulate its duties and remuneration.

It in no degree affects this doctrine to say, that certain churchmen prompted Henry and his immediate successors to make the church what it is; and, by their learning and wisdom, aided the legislative body in establishing our state episcopacy. These circumstances cannot militate against the political foundation and total dependence of the church; since nothing thus prepared and recommended would have been legal, binding, or admissible, had it not been made law by acts of parliament.—Solicitors draw up bills to be submitted to the legislative council; but, till regularly passed, they are no more operative than as much waste paper.

Nor is it of any moment in this question that most of the doctrines, rites, prayers, titles, habits, offices, regulations, &c. of the Church of England, existed in the previous Romish system of this country, and were merely copied, adopted, and brought into a legal position by the civil power. Whether the church be a plagiarism, or an original work, it was established and made legal and binding on all conformists only by the state. To embody current customs in acts of parliament, is an every day practice, and no more diminishes its authority, or renders them less the creatures of the legislative will, than if they had been the immediate inventions of sovereign ingenuity.

Neither is the case in the smallest measure altered by calling it a purification, restoration, or reformation of the old religion. For, designate it what you will, it was effected by the political head of the nation, in its royal and legislative capacity; the clergy, as such, having no more power in the business than as many sheep. In fact, the final settlement of the state-religion, by the act of 1 Eliz. chap. 2, was effected against the known will of all the bishops, and the major part of the priest and religionists, of those times.

SECOND.—CORROBORATIONS OF THE FACT—*that the National Church is the Creature and Vassal of the State.*—I shall quote the following:—

Bp. Warburton—"At the reformation, the church resigned its independence—made the chief magistrate its supreme head—and now, without "his approbation and allowance, can do nor decree any thing."

Dean Prideaux—"What power the pope had used, was, on the abrogation of the papal authority in this realm, transferred to the king by the "statutes."—The powers of the pope were universal and absolute.

Hooker—"Christian kings have spiritual dominion or supreme power in "ecclesiastical affairs and causes; and, within their own precinct, an authority and power to command even in matters of Christian religion."

Bp. Burnett—"At the first establishment of the Church of England all "the bishops took out commissions from the crown for exercising the spiritual "jurisdiction during the king's pleasure only."

Blackstone—"The Parliament of Britain can alter the established religion of the land; as was done in a variety of instances in the reigns of Henry VIII. and his children."

Duke of Sussex—"The three branches of the legislature have power to modify or annihilate the Church of England whenever they please."

Archbishop Wake—"The king hath power without a convocation, to make and publish such injunctions as he shall think the necessities of the church do require."

Bp. Horsley—"To the prince or to the law, we acknowledge ourselves indebted for all our secular possessions; for the rank and dignity annexed to the superior orders of the clergy; for our secular authority; for the jurisdiction of our courts; and for every civil effect which follows the exercise of our authority."

Bp. Van Mildert—"Even over her own members her controul is very limited, and entirely subject to the legislative and executive authorities of the country."

Archdeacon Glover—"It is from the state that our church revenues, as protestant, were derived—it is under the sanction and direction of the state that they are continued to us."

THIRD.—A STATEMENT OF PARTICULARS—*showing wherein the Church of England is the Creature and Vassal of the State.*—For instance—

I. The state creates all the bishops—and through them all the clergy of the church—as it creates generals, who, in turn, make subaltern officers.

II. It has a legal power to unmake the bishops and clergy—and to divest them of their office and ecclesiastical revenues. 37 Henry VIII.

III. It interprets the scriptures for the bishops and clergy, and obliges them to *adopt* all its views and to *declare* them agreeable to divine truth.

IV. It determines what version of the scriptures and what prayers the clergy shall read in the churches—at what times they shall be read—and in what manner and portions.

V. It appoints what sacraments shall be administered—who shall officiate in them—and what kind of persons shall be partakers of them.

VI. It settles the ranks and orders of the clergy—their titles—duties—authority—dresses—and every thing appertaining to them officially.

VII. It directs the prelates what they shall say at ordinations, confirmations, and in worshipping the Almighty—even to the letter.

VIII. It prescribes the exact language of the priest to be used at christenings, weddings, visiting the sick, interring the dead, &c.

IX. It specifies the sign to be made in baptism—the bowings, bendings, turnings, sittings, standings, &c. to be observed during divine service.

X. It is the lawful lord and owner of all the houses, lands, tithes, &c. in the hands of the church—and sovereign and source of all its incomes.

XI. It fixes the stipends of the priesthood—prescribes the bounds of their operations—and cuts out the work they shall weekly perform.

XII. It has drawn up the catechism which the clergy are to teach the rising generation, and makes their use of it obligatory and imperative.

XIII. It possesses the lawful power to summon the bishops and clergy to convocation—to dissolve them when met—or to prevent their meeting.

XIV. It obliges them to observe any fresh laws it may make—to read any new prayer it may compose—and to pray for any person it pleases.

XV. It nominates the days and times the church shall sanctify—the fasts and feasts it shall observe—when collections shall be made, &c.

XVI. It allows no church to be built without a specific act of Parliament—nor a new cemetery for episcopalians, without its license.

It is an indisputable fact, that all the *bishops, clergy, and members* of the church, in their ecclesiastical capacity, cannot alter a single doctrine, law, rule, posture, rite, or ceremony of their system; that the *officiating priest* cannot lawfully omit or add a prayer in public service, but as directed by the statutes, nor baptize, marry, catechize, bury, &c. but in language supplied to his lips by act of parliament; and that *his hearers* cannot elect their own minister or withhold his stipend, or dismiss from Christian fellowship the worst man in the parish. They are all treated as mere children, who must quietly submit to the parental oversight of the state; or as dolts, who must be prompted every time they have to speak or kneel in the worship of God.

FOURTH.—THE DEGRADED CONDITION OF THE CHURCH—as a *Creature and Vassal of the State*.—Did space allow, I might here dilate on the “most religious and gracious” features of the powers which founded the national church, and which have subsequently managed all its affairs—on the spiritual and entire independence of the Jewish and apostolical churches of all civil domination—and on the greater consistency of popery, in having a presumed spiritual and infallible head on earth. But I must merely advert—

I. *To the debased and enslaved condition of the national church*.—It has suffered itself to be brought into abject bondage, and to be stripped of every vestige of independence and self-controul; and all for the sake of wealth and worldly distinctions. Many of its members may have gained their end; but it has been at the sacrifice of honour and spiritual dignity. They have, in effect, like Judas, sold their master for *money*; they have transferred their allegiance from him to men for *money*; they have prostrated their souls before the shrine of mammon for *money*! Indeed, of all the churches in Christendom, those allied with the state, in this kingdom, are in the most disreputable and humiliating condition. And while such an unholy union exists, their elevation, freedom, and independence are utterly impossible.

II. *To the superior principles and more honourable position of Evangelical Dissent*.—While admitting, in the fullest sense, the rights of the political government in all civil affairs—and while cheerfully rendering to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s; in all religious and spiritual matters, Dissenters acknowledge no head but Christ, and no laws but his revealed will. They regard the domination of the state in divine things as presumptuous and wicked, and the enforcement of its laws on the consciences and pockets of mankind as direct and infamous persecution. They are devoutly and nobly jealous for the authority of their Lord, and will not transfer the honour due only to him to any other. And they regard those that do so, for the sake of temporal honour and emolument, as traitors to his name and cause.

UNGODLY BAPTISMAL SERVICE OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

By the REV. W. THORN, Winchester.

In a previous paper, on the "Church Catechism," I have cited certain parts of the Baptismal Service of the establishment to corroborate my exposition of that iniquitous hand-book of religious instruction. I now intend to exhibit more generally the evils of this ceremony; feeling confident that all intelligent and honest readers of the subsequent remarks will unite with me in denouncing the episcopalian method of administering this sacrament as most unscriptural, superstitious, and full of danger to the souls of men. Having arrived at this conclusion, I assume that they will no longer sanction such a shocking perversion of a Christian institution--will never again stand sponsors to either children or adults--and will never take their offspring to the parish priest to dedicate them to God. I shall notice--

FIRST.—THE OBJECTIONABLE NAME OCCASIONALLY GIVEN TO THIS ORDINANCE.—"Where the child was born or *christened*" . . . "Then shall he not *christen* the child."—The sense naturally and properly attached to this term is, that children are made Christians in baptism—and as such must be ever after received and treated. As the church knows of no Christians but such as are supposed to be spiritually regenerated and eternally saved; the use of this phraseology is calculated to lead conformists to the conclusion, that all baptized children are Christians in deed and in truth, and their final salvation perfectly secured. This opinion is extremely prevalent among conformists, who much more frequently talk of *christening*, than of baptizing, their children.

It is certain that baptism is never called christening in the New Testament, and that no effects are attributed to this ministerial rite to warrant the use of such a delusive designation. It is also certain that protestant Dissenters, who profess to be guided only by the revealed will of God in spiritual affairs, never pretend to make children or adults Christians by baptism. All they design is to dedicate them to God in a way which best exhibits the necessity and mode of communicating divine influence to the soul.

SECONDLY.—THE POPISH AND SUPERSTITIOUS SIGN OF THE CROSS IN BAPTISM.—"We sign him with the sign of the cross, in token that hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his banner, against sin, the world, and the devil." The divine authority for making this water-mark on the baby's brow is given in the 30th canon:—"The honour and dignity of the name of the cross begat a reverend estimation even in the apostles' time (*for aught that is known to the contrary*) of the sign of the cross, which the Christians shortly after used in all their actions."

But there is not a shadow of evidence to prove that the apostles ever made the sign of the cross in baptizing, or on any other occasion; and if it be now made because their successors used it "in all their actions;" to con-

fine it to christenings is absurd; and the numerous crossings of the catholics must be far more defensible. To suppose that this evanescent sign of the cross has any effect on the future conduct of the baptized, is ridiculous. If any permanent influence were to be produced it should not be made by the parson's wet finger, but with a lancet or a red-hot iron! And, as a symbol, a circle or triangle would equally answer the purpose. But right-angles having been enjoined by the "lawful magistrate," no person can be christened in the Church of England without such a reverend crossing.

THIRDLY.—THE *employment* OF GODFATHERS AND GODMOTHERS IN BAPTISM.—These officials are not selected because of any supposed piety or superior qualifications for their work, or for any special interest in their charge. "No parent shall be urged to be present, nor be admitted to answer "as godfather for his own child; nor any godfather or godmother shall be "suffered to make any other answer or speech, than by the book of common "prayer is prescribed in that behalf; neither shall any person be admitted "godfather or godmother to any child at christening or confirmation before "the said person so undertaking hath received the holy communion;"—(Can. 29.) which may be received by any one when confirmed.

These sponsors are commanded to promise and vow, in the presence of God, and with all the solemnity of an oath, that the child "*shall* renounce "the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all "covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh, so that it "will not follow nor be led by them. . . . That it *shall* believe all the articles "of the Christian faith, keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk "in the same all the days of its life."

That there is not the slightest intimation in scripture that godfathers and godmothers were employed in baptism, will be readily admitted by all who carefully read their Bibles. It is also manifest that if they perform all they undertake, parents are necessarily deprived of their natural and scripturally enjoined oversight and management of the religious education of their own children. And it is equally evident, to all considerate persons, that they engage to accomplish what the parson, and themselves are, there and then, fully assured cannot be performed by them, and what not one sponsor in a thousand ever attempts to fulfil. Hence they are induced to make vows and promises with no other prospect than that of breaking them; which, in the sight of God, is a direct falsehood, and near akin to perjuring their souls, at the bidding of the church, in a Christian sacrament!

FOURTH.—THE STUPID AND RIDICULOUS DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE PRIEST AND THE SPONSORS.—"Then shall the priest speak unto the godfathers and godmothers on this wise, This infant must promise by you that "are his sureties (until he come of age to take it upon himself) that he will "renounce the devil and all his works, &c."

Minister—"Dost thou in the name of this child renounce the devil and "all his works?" *Godfather*—"I renounce them all."

Minister—"Dost thou believe in God the Father Almighty, &c.?" *Godfather*—"All this I steadfastly believe."

Minister—"Wilt thou be baptized in this faith?" *Godfather*—"That 'is my desire."

Minister—"Wilt thou obediently keep God's holy will and commandments, &c.?" *Godfather*—"I will."

You will observe that the infant is presumed really and personally to renounce the devil—to believe the apostle's creed—to desire baptism—and to resolve on constant and universal obedience to God. If this be not an ascertained fact, sponsors are not warranted to say so in its name, any more than in the name of an adult. But how have they so fully discovered the baby's piety, belief, desires, and resolves! For aught they know, it may be a little quaker or antipedobaptist! Merely to guess is to venture at a gross misrepresentation! They are not questioned about the probable future, but the actual present, desires and intentions of the child. Nor are they called upon to state their own personal views and wishes. They are interrogated only as the mouth-piece and interpreters of the infant; otherwise the child might as justly be baptized by proxy as believe and resolve by proxy!

A more unmeaning or absurd jargon, on religious subjects, is not to be found in all the compass of ecclesiastical nonsense—and this too in the church of which the mighty, the noble, and the wise are enrolled as members—and whose ministers are honoured with distinctions, clad in splendour, and revered as oracles! How any but a blockhead can look grave at such a christening, is beyond my judgment to divine—perhaps the commonness of the scene prevents the observer from noticing its absurdities. Dissent presents nothing half so ridiculous.

While noticing the nonsense connected with this rite, I may be allowed to ask for the scriptural authority and spiritual utility of godfathers and godmothers at the christening of persons of *riper* years—say from twenty to fifty? They are appointed and necessary to the due performance of this ceremony—but the origin and use of them, the defenders of the church can best explain. Perhaps they are as scriptural and necessary as the "father," who gives away in marriage a woman of seventy to to a man of fourscore!

FIFTH.—THE SOUL-DESTROYING DOCTRINE TAUGHT IN THIS BAPTIZING SERVICE.—It is, that all persons, young or old, christened at Church are therein spiritually regenerated and rendered safe for heaven. To make this plain, let us notice the language of the church:—

1. *The explanation of this doctrine*—"Forasmuch as all men are conceived and born in sin, and that our Saviour Christ saith, none can enter into the kingdom of God except he be regenerated and born anew of water and the Holy Ghost, &c. . . . Ye have prayed that our Lord Jesus Christ would vouchsafe to receive him, to release him from his sins, to sanctify him with the Holy Ghost, to give him the kingdom of heaven and everlasting life." This is *Baptismal Regeneration*.

2. *The prayer for obtaining it*—"We call upon thee for this infant, that he coming to thy holy baptism, may receive remission of his sins by spiritual regeneration. . . . Give thy Holy Spirit to this infant that he may be born again, and be made an heir of everlasting salvation, through our

"Lord Jesus Christ.... Sanctify the water to the mystical washing away of sin, and grant that this child now may be baptized therein, may receive the fullness of thy grace, and ever remain in the number of thy faithful and elect children."

3. *The confidence of success*—"Ye have heard that our Lord Jesus Christ hath promised in his gospel to grant all things that ye have prayed for; which promise he, for his part, will most surely keep and perform.... Doubt ye not therefore, but earnestly believe that he will likewise favourably receive this present infant, that he will embrace him in the arms of his mercy, that he will give unto him the blessing of eternal life, and make him partaker of his everlasting kingdom."

4. *The accomplishment of the object*—The child having been baptized the saving effect is confidently assumed to have been produced.

IN PUBLIC BAPTISM we read, "Seeing now, dearly beloved brethren, that this child is regenerate and grafted into the body of Christ's church, let us give thanks to Almighty God for these benefits.... We yield thee hearty thanks most merciful Father that it hath pleased thee to regenerate this infant WITH THY HOLY SPIRIT, to receive him for thy own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into thy holy church.... Grant that he being dead unto sin, and being alive unto righteousness, and buried with Christ in his death, may crucify the old man, &c."

IN PRIVATE BAPTISM—This child "being born in original sin, and in the wrath of God, is now by the laver of regeneration in baptism, received into the number of the children of God and heirs of everlasting life.... Doubt ye not but earnestly believe that he hath favourably received this present infant, that he hath embraced him with the arms of his mercy, and MADE HIM PARTAKER of his everlasting kingdom."

IN ADULT BAPTISM—"Seeing now, dearly beloved brethren, that these persons are regenerate, and grafted into the body of Christ's church, let us give thanks unto Almighty God for these benefits.... Give thy Holy Spirit to these persons, that being NOW BORN AGAIN and made heirs of everlasting salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, they may continue thy servants."

Were further evidence necessary to prove that Baptismal Regeneration is the doctrine of the state-religion, I might refer the reader to the CONFIRMATION service and the CHURCH CATECHISM, and to a variety of other unexceptional testimonies collected in my pamphlet—"THE ANTICHRISTIAN AND PERNICIOUS DOCTRINES OF THE CHURCH CATECHISM." I will merely observe that, as a consequence of being christened by a state-priest, and confirmed by the bishop, persons are deemed fully qualified for the Lord's Supper—are married, addressed, and buried as genuine Christians—and that too, though their lives may evince any thing but a sanctified heart.

I have now fully established the title of my tract. I have shown that the current designation of this ceremony is exceedingly delusive—that the sign of the cross is a gross superstition—that the vows of sponsors can never be performed—that the dialogue between the priest and godfather is absurd and childish—and that the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration is plainly and emphatically inculcated—a doctrine which, as a pious clergyman observes, "HAS DESTROYED MORE SOULS THAN ANY ONE SINGLE ERROR WHICH HAS BEEN BRANDED ON THE BLACK LIST OF HERESY."

By sanctioning this service the parties incur the charge of ignorance, profanity, and guilt: the CHURCH for possessing such a wicked and disgraceful institution—the CLERGY for administering it among their unenlightened hearers—the PEOPLE for standing sponsors and perjuring their souls—and PARENTS for taking their children to the national priest for baptism. If the Bible be our guide, on these points there cannot be a second opinion.

Having now learnt the evils of the church service, the God-fearing reader will surely resolve to have his children baptized only in the Dissenting Chapel, where such falsehoods are not told—such superstitions never displayed—such infamous doctrines never promulgated—and where this rite is always performed, "WITHOUT MONEY AND WITHOUT PRICE."

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[No. 22.]

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

A DISCORDANT AND SCHISMATICAL SECT.

By the Rev. W. THORN, Winchester.

"Whence did the Church of England derive her authority? Why, SHE IS A SCHISMATICAL AND HERETICAL SECT. The Members of the Church of England are BAPTIZED BY "SCHISMATICS."---QUEEN'S ADVOCATE, CHRONICLE, Feb. 6, 1841.

THE Church of England, however lauded as national and apostolic, is *undoubtedly but one of the many religious sects existing in this country.* Its being large, compared with any single dissenting denomination, does not destroy its sectarian character. Congregationalism is large compared with several minor communions; but that does not destroy the sectarianism of the Congregational persuasion.

Nor will the incidental circumstance, of episcopacy being endowed, prevent its being regarded as a sect, in the judgment of dissenters; any more than the endowment of methodism would prevent episcopalians from regarding it as a mere favoured and privileged sect. Indeed, the term "sect" signifies a "*part*," great or small, of the general church; and, till all Christian professors in the land unite with the state-system, a mere sect it must remain.

The partial and uninformed advocate of the law-church is accustomed to speak of all our various dissenting societies, as if they formed one communion, and were accountable for each others views and conduct; and then (like the Catholics) to boast of the unity and harmony of episcopacy, as contrasted with the disagreements witnessed among them.

This, however is jesuitical and unjust; for the advocate of Independency might, with equal propriety, regard all the episcopal, established, and endowed churches in christendom, as constituting one identical fraternity, and accountable for each others views and conduct; and then boast of the unity and harmony of the Independent body, as contrasted with the disagreements witnessed among them. For the truth is—and every intelligent man knows it—that the various dissenting sects of this country are no more constitutionally connected than are all the episcopal, established, and endowed churches—Greek, Romish, and Protestant—existing in Europe.

The only fair and honest method to be adopted in this inquiry is to contrast or compare the privileged sect of this land with any other single persuasion, or with every one of them individually and consecutively; and then to determine which of them is, in itself, more peaceful, accordant, and united. This being done, it will unquestionably be found *that the Church of England is in itself, a more distracted, divided, and Schismatical Sect than any other in the kingdom.*

To support this assumption, it is not requisite to prove that all the ministers and members of any dissenting body see precisely alike, in every minor religious subject, or even that they do not occasionally debate among them.

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selves on various topics of considerable importance. It is only necessary to assert, what few will venture to deny, that each seceding denomination is, upon the whole, in a state of much greater harmony and agreement within itself, than the endowed and established hierarchy. But to render this fact simple and clear, I shall show—

FIRST.—That the ministers and members of the Church of England hold and promulgate more DISCORDANT and conflicting doctrines and sentiments than those of any other sect in the country.—Practical Conformists differ widely among themselves respecting,—

I. *The divine nature and persons of the adorable Godhead*—Some of them being Socinians—others Arians—others Sabellians—and others orthodox Trinitarians—as their writings fully testify, and as high episcopalian authorities have repeatedly admitted.

II. *The doctrines of election and grace*—Some being decided Antinomians—others moderate Calvinists—and others low Arminians—while the different shades of opinion between all those creeds find numerous abettors in the state-persuasion.

III. *The doctrines of justification and faith*—Some arguing that we are justified only by faith in Christ—others that we are justified through the sacraments of the church—others that our supposed good works assist in our justification—and others that no upright, moral, and virtuous person will ever be sent to perdition.

IV. *The principles of popery and protestantism*—Some contending for “the Bible and the Bible only”—others for the Bible and tradition—others for the Bible and expediency—and others, like the Puseyites, for nearly all the peculiar dogmas and doings of the Romish Church.

V. *The spiritual headship and dominion of the state*—Some maintaining that it is lawful and right for the civil authority to legislate in religious matters—and others that the bishops and clergy are the only proper persons to manage church affairs.

VI. *The mode of maintaining the Christian cause*—Some of them advocating the voluntary principle in part or wholly—and others strenuously contending that every sect and subject in the land should be compelled to contribute to the episcopalian party.

VII. *The virtue and efficacy of the sacraments*—Some regarding them as only signs and symbols of spiritual blessings—and others boldly defending the sentiment, that when duly administered by a lawful Priest, they are always savingly efficacious.

VIII. *The orders, grades, and appointment of ministers*—Some approving of the present clerical ranks and arrangements—and others avowing their dissent from them, and especially condemning the system of patronage, and its usual accompaniment,—“trading in the souls of men.”

IX. *The cathedral institutions of the church*—Some exulting over them as noble, useful, and glorious establishments—and others viewing them as expensive and useless, and as a harbour for a host of drones, who feast in comparative idleness at the expence of the country.

X. *The prayer-book, creeds, services, &c. of the church*—Some of them object to the baptismal, confirmation, marriage, absolution, ordination, and burial services—and others strenuously defend them—some applaud the Apostles and Athanasian creeds, and others repudiate them—some approve of the rites and ceremonies of the state-worship and others dislike them.

But space will not permit me to enter into further details. Enough has been noticed to show the discordance of the ministers and members of the parliamentary church respecting almost every thing important and distinctive in it. Every declaration made above might be fully sustained by a reference to the writings and sayings of conformists of the first authority—the facts, however, are so notorious among intelligent people, that citations or references would be quite superfluous.—I shall now show,—

SECONDLY.—That the church of England—by dissenting from the church of Rome, and through the incessant contentions of its ministers and members—is the most SCHISMATICAL sect in the country.

I. *Using the term SCHISM, in its present ordinary sense, for SEPARATION*; I contend, with the *Queen's Advocate*, previously referred to, that the establishment is a schismatical church.—It as really and truly dissented from the previous religious system of England, as the nonconformists of the seventeenth century dissented from the then existing hierarchy. It may be called reformation, restoration, or any thing else—but its actual dissent, separation, or secession is a fact beyond all reasonable dispute. It not merely committed, what it usually calls, the ordinary sin of schism, by this separation; but, on its own principles, it did so for *less* reasons, or for *fewer* spiritual advantages, than evangelical dissenters feel and secure by separating from the church of England—the difference between popery and state-prelacy being much less than between state prelacy and congregationalism; and episcopalians being more likely to join the church of Rome than protestant seceders to return to the bosom of the national hierarchy. Hence, it is clear that the national church is a greater and more unjustifiable schismatic than those seceding societies which it gravely charges with the “dreadful sin and guilt of schism!”

II. *Using the term SCHISM in its scriptural sense, for ANGRY CONTENTION*; I further aver that the establishment is the most schismatical church in the country. To sustain this assertion, I beg to refer you to facts as notorious as its very existence:—

1. To the manifest dislike and contempt with which the *evangelical and orthodox ministers* have generally regarded each other—frequently denouncing one another as heretics and fanatics, and mutually shutting each other out of their respective pulpits—as if both were infected with the plague.

2. To the more *protestant and popish* parties in the church—who are, at this moment fighting and railing against each other—ready to excommunicate one another—and to consign each other to the bottomless pit, as impious renegades—from Cramner and the pope.

3. To the *voluntary and coercive parties*, whose annual disputes, uproars, and violence, in their own consecrated buildings, respecting tithes, church-

rates, and other pecuniary affairs, manifest the entire destitution of that unity of which the advocates of the church are continually boasting.

4. To the *believing and infidel parties*, in the church who very coolly and conscientiously deride and condemn each other for their assumed folly and impiety—their stupid credulity, and shocking hardness of heart—and yet they are all good and zealous churchmen!

5. To the *high and the low church parties*, whose quarrels began at the reformation and have not terminated yet; who not unfrequently unchristianize each other—and, without the least apprehension of personal error, bite and devour, and almost consume, one another.

In a word, there is a deadly conflict throughout the length and breadth of the church—*Priest against Priest—Bishop against Bishop—Prebendary against Prebendary—Doctor against Doctor—Fellow against Fellow—Curate against Curate—and a large portion of their hearers against them all.*—This schism is manifest in their universities, at their visitations, and among their champions in the national senate; it is strenuously maintained by antagonist volumes, pamphlets, tracts, magazines, and newspapers—in which the terms of abuse and condemnation are any thing but soft and brotherly; and it originates in almost an infinite variety of sources—every doctrine—every sacrament—every ceremony—patronage—place—property—preferment—all are prolific of feuds and schisms in the law church—every member and minister of which may therefore, be justly set down as MORE OR LESS OF A SCHISMATIC.

As the assertions now made cannot be righteously denied, and certainly not refuted; I shall take it for granted that the Church of England is a most discordant and schismatical sect—its ministers and members being mentally divided into numerous factions—each at war with his neighbour—and yet all glorying in the fact of belonging to the only pure, united, and apostolic communion in the kingdom or in the world!!

I now solicit any champion of the parliamentary religion to prove that there is even a *tithe* of such disagreements and contentions in any nonconforming sect in the nation! And if this cannot be done the proposition contained in the title of this tract is manifestly established. I might even go further, and defy him to show that there is more religious difference and strife among *all* the dissenting sects put together, than is witnessed in his own single denomination.

But it will be asked, what can prevent such a mass of heterogeneous and conflicting elements from falling into a hundred pieces, or hold them together for a single month in one visible communion? Principally, if not exclusively, a supreme love of ease, money, and worldly respectability.—Take these from the church, and there is hardly a doubt that tens of thousands of its professed friends and most noisy advocates would very soon bid it an everlasting farewell.—The state has virtually erected an altar to *mammon* in every parochial sanctuary, and supplies it daily with such secular oblations as shall most powerfully attract those people who chiefly or exclusively “love the world and the things of the world.”

CHURCH OF ENGLAND

AN INEQUITABLE AND PERSECUTING SECT.

A LETTER TO THE REV. S. WILBERFORCE, M.A.
ARCHDEACON OF SURREY, PREBENDARY OF WINCHESTER, ETC.

By the Rev. W. THORN, Winchester.

REV. SIR

In your Primary "Charge delivered to the Archdeaconry of Surrey," you introduce the subject of CHURCH RATES, and give your advice as to the best way of enforcing the payment of them.—In case a vestry should refuse to sanction the Warden's demands, you recommend them to make the assessment themselves, and "TO PROCEED IN THE ECCLESIASTICAL COURTS AGAINST THOSE WHO REFUSE TO PERFORM THEIR DUTY IN GRANTING A NECESSARY RATE. THE NAMES OF THE LEADERS IN THIS OPPOSITION SHOULD BE TAKEN DOWN, AND THEY SHOULD BE FORTHWITH PROCEEDED AGAINST in the ecclesiastical courts for their refusal. And "this is no impotent redress. They will first be monished of their duty and ordered "to fulfil it. . . . After which a writ DE CONTUMACE DE CAPIENDO" (catch the culprit!) "will issue from the court of chancery against the offenders, and all sheriffs, "gaolers, and other officers, are authorized and required to do the same, by taking "and detaining the body of the person against whom the said writ shall be directed," &c.—P. 14-16.

Now, it is not a question with me whether such advice be legal or not—I merely look at the temper and principles manifested in this citation—and I have no hesitation in pronouncing them unrighteous and persecuting in the last degree. Indeed, I do not believe that were Bonner and Gardiner now alive, and in your situation, they would go a step farther than yourself in punishing conforming and dissenting opponents of Church Rates.

But presuming that you are only one of a class, and merely embody the spirit which your church is calculated to inspire; (though happily thousands of episcopalian are too wise or too benevolent to be much influenced by it;) I shall briefly expose the persecuting nature of the system to which you belong, to the dogmas of which you have subscribed, and of which you, and most of your clerical brethren, are evidently the victims; rather than make you an especial object of attack.—I say then,

FIRST.—*That the High Church party does not persecute through mere respect for the civil and ecclesiastical laws of the country.*

The reverse is constantly and artfully pretended by most religious persecutors—"while the law exists, it must be obeyed." But were this their genuine motive, would they not apply the same reasoning to every existing law? Yet they do not. What then are their grounds for this selection and partiality? Has the love of domination and money any thing to do in directing their choice? That they connive at the violation of numerous *civil* enactments, it would be useless to prove, as every one knows it—and that they treat many of their own *ecclesiastical* laws, with equal neglect, will appear from the following references to the canons of the church:—

CANON 15. Enacts, that the Litany shall be said or sung every Wednesday and Friday in every parish church in the country—This is not enforced.

CANON 26. Enacts, that notorious offenders, unreconciled opponents, schismatics, and strangers, shall not communicate—This is not enforced.

CANON 41. Enacts, that no pluralists shall hold any benefices more than 30 miles apart, and shall reside on each a portion of every year—Is this enforced?

CANON 44. Enacts, that every beneficed clergyman, having no lawful impediment, shall preach at least one sermon in his parish weekly—Is this enforced?

CANON 59. Enacts, that all ministers shall catechize the young people of their respective cures, for half an hour every Sabbath—Is this enforced?

CANON 74. Enacts, that in their journeys they shall wear cloaks with sleeves, without guards, welts, long button or cuts; and never a wrought nightcap—Is this enforced?

CANON 75. Enacts, that ministers shall not usually resort to taverns or alehouses—nor waste their time idly in playing at dice, cards, or tables, &c.—Is this enforced?

CANON 109. Enacts, that if any person offend by adultery, whoredom, incest, or drunkenness, or by swearing, ribaldry, usury, or any other uncleanness and wickedness, they shall be presented to the bishops, &c.—Is this enforced?

CANON 110. Enacts, that ministers shall present to the bishops every defender of popish or other erroneous doctrine, known to exist in their parishes—Is this done?

CANON 112. Enacts, that they shall also present the names of all the men and women in their cures, of the age of 16 years, who do not receive the communion before Easter—Pray is this done?

The above is a mere *sample* of the ecclesiastical laws which are constantly violated with impunity by the ministers and members of the state-church. But they are, in every sense, as obligatory as others which are rigorously enforced; and while they are not duly observed, it is in vain that you plead respect for the laws as an argument for enforcing the payment of ecclesiastical exactions.—To call them antiquated and ill-adapted to recent times and customs, is to surrender your boasted principle, and to proclaim yourself a gratuitous pilferer of your brethren.—I might affirm the like of your spiritual courts, and your compulsory mode of supporting Christianity; and if your judgment be good, mine is equally valid.

In fact, church rates, to which you particularly allude, are not founded on any express law or original enactment at all; but rest solely on customary usage, originating in the dishonest selfishness of the clergy; and stand in the same position as Polygamy among the Jews, and Slavery in the West Indies. And yet, for constitutionally resisting this unscriptural imposition, you, and your Christian brethren, set us down as iniquitous violators of the law, and would compel us to end our days within the walls of a prison!! How unlike your pious and benevolent Father!

SECONDLY.—*That the clergy and their obsequious partizans do actually and grievously persecute under the sanction of law—without its concurrence—and even against its provisions.*

I purposely put the clergy first, for as a body, they have always been head and chief in persecuting nonconformists. Indeed, without their connivance or encouragement few of their hearers would venture to maltreat those who dissent from the state worship. At all events, if the endowed priesthood were to set their faces against persecution, it would soon cease in the kingdom.

I. IT IS AS TRULY AND REALLY PERSECUTION TO ENFORCE AN UNRIGHTEOUS LAW IN RELIGIOUS MATTERS, AS TO PUNISH DISSENTERS WITHOUT ANY LAW AT ALL.—If this be not true the confessors, martyrs, apostles, and the Son of God himself, who suffered according to the then existing laws, were not persecuted at all; Cramner and Aylmer, Bonner and Gardiner, were not persecutors; Henry VIII. Mary, Elizabeth, and their tyrannical and

cruel successors, down to the revolution, were not persecutors; nor was there any persecution in the Spanish Inquisition, nor in France on Bartholomew day—because all was done according to law! Even your first 12 canons are not cruel and persecuting, because they are the law of the church! In fact, there has been very little persecution in the world except under the shield, and in the name, of law.—You well know,

THAT LAW AND JUSTICE ARE OFTEN WIDELY DIFFERENT.—It was lawful, some time ago, to burn reputed witches; to buy, and sell, and flog the negroes; and to hang men for forgery and sheep-stealing. But was it just? If so, why is it not done now? It may be lawful to give a day-labourer but 5s. a week to maintain a large family; to sell an article worth 10s. for ten pounds; or to keep tradesmen out of their money till they are ruined by their customers. But is it just? You know also,

THAT LAW AND RELIGION ARE OFTEN AT VARIANCE.—It may be lawful to compel dissenters to support the Church of England—to feed the clergy—to wash their surplices—and to keep their buildings in repair; and if they refuse to pay, it may be lawful to seize their goods, clap them into the spiritual courts, to be tried by their enemies, and thence, according to your own advice, into the county jail. But is it religious, is it CHRISTIAN, is it what the Saviour or his apostles either did or recommended?

Let not the advocates of compulsory payments to religion think of getting rid of the disgrace attached to religious persecutors, by attempting to father their impiety on the laws of the land. And, doubtless, this would be your own view of the subject, were methodism established, and you compelled, by law, to pay church rates to the Wesleyan Conference! The clergy, who put in force antisciptural and persecuting laws, are much more criminal in the sight of God and of all honest men than the stupid mob which pelts the non-conforming preacher of the gospel with stones and rotten eggs. In truth, they develop a principle which, fairly carried out, would hang or burn the obstinate dissenter as a heretic—could it be done according to law.

II. THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND DOES GRIEVOUSLY PERSECUTE DISSENTERS UNDER THE SANCTION OF LAW IN A VARIETY OF WAYS.—

1. It forcibly takes from them THE MONEY which their consciences tell them should be given to the furtherance of that specific cause which they regard as most accordant with the revealed will of Christ—to the great impoverishment of dissenting institutions. Nor is the amount trifling. I have shown, in previous papers of the present series (Nos. 13. 14.) that the income of the church is, *at least*, EIGHT MILLIONS a year—that it is all derived from national property—and that this is paid by the CONSUMERS of titheable and taxable articles. Now, practical conformists are not more than one-third of the population—another third receive no benefit from the church, as they do not attend its services—and the other third are nonconformists—who pay to the church full TWO MILLIONS AND HALF A YEAR!

2. It forcibly compels them to support a body OF CLERGYMEN whose principles and procedure they conscientiously condemn. It obliges,

TRINITARIANS to maintain Sabellian, Arian, and Socinian Clergymen—
CALVINISTS to maintain Arminian and Pelagian Clergymen—

ARMINIANS to maintain Calvinistic and Antinomian Clergymen—
 SOCINIANS to maintain Athanasian and Trinitarian Clergymen—
 CATHOLICS to maintain the most violent Protestant Clergymen—
 CHRISTIANS to maintain the most ignorant and worldly Clergymen—

And so on, through all the catalogue of clerical characters in the state-religion. Nor is this the full extent of the grievance. They are forced to supply the luxuries of those Clergymen who treat them with contempt, who call them schismatics, heretics and fanatics, and persecute them even unto prison. They are forced to fee the very men who preach the most bitter discourses against dissent and the doctrines which dissenters conscientiously believe and promulgate. If this be not trying to human nature, and persecution in its sharpest form, I know not what persecution means!!

3. It makes them uphold and diffuse DOCTRINES AND RITES which they regard as antichristian and fearfully injurious to the souls of men. It compels, INDEPENDENTS AND PRESBYTERIANS to support National Episcopacy—
 GENUINE PROTESTANTS to support, defend, and extend Semi-Popery—
 BIBLE CHRISTIANS to support and diffuse Baptismal Regeneration—

AND ALL NONCONFORMISTS—who detest the notions of Priestly Absolution; who are shocked at the impiety of the Burial Service; and who regard the Union of Church and State with indignation, &c.—are compelled, by law, to support and propagate them all!!

Now, this may be quite legal—but is it equitable—is it doing to others as you would be done by? Suppose *yourself* compelled, by law, to subscribe—in the form of rates, dues, and tithes—ten pounds a year to a catholic, socinian, or congregational minister; would you be satisfied with being told it was the law of the sect or of the country? Would you not regard the law itself as bad, and the imposers of it as wicked persecutors? Unquestionably! Can you wonder, then, at being regarded as a persecutor yourself?

III. CHURCHMEN OFTEN PERSECUTE WITHOUT THE SANCTION OF LAW, AND SOMETIMES IN OPPOSITION TO ITS ENACTMENTS.—As,

1. When at the nod or bidding of the parson, they oppose and punish dissenting PREACHERS, on introducing the gospel into villages and hamlets.

2. When they withhold from poor dissenters their equitable share of the charities and gifts intended for the necessitous in general.

3. When they threaten dissenting LABOURERS and mechanics with the loss of work and favours for attending dissenting places of worship.

4. When they abandon the shops of dissenting tradesmen, merely because they conscientiously refuse to attend the parish church.

All this is constantly done by the High Church Clergy, their wives and partizans—as you well know from observation, if not from practical experience. And that this is persecution, covertly and indirectly carried on, you will, if honest and enlightened, fully admit.

I think I have now clearly shown that the Church of England is the most inequitable and persecuting sect in this country.—If I have misrepresented the case, or reasoned erroneously on the subject, you can rectify my mistakes. Or if, to counterbalance my exposures, you can show that dissent, in any form in this country, is half as persecuting as your own system, you will not fail to do so. You will surely not follow the steps of some of your weaker and less-gifted brethren who charge me with uttering falsehoods, and yet very cunningly and cautiously avoid the task of fairly and openly maintaining their accusations!

Warren, Typ. Winton.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

A SIGNAL AND MISERABLE FAILURE.

By the Rev. W. THORN, Winchester.

WHEN I assert that the Church of England is "A Signal and Miserable Failure"—I do not mean to say (any more than I would of Popery) that it has not possessed many great and good clergymen, or that many souls have not been converted to God by their labours; but that—taking into account the vast amount of its revenues, the number of its agents, the length of its existence, its national privileges, and its high sanctions by the mighty and the noble—it has been any thing but successful—especially when compared with the progress and efficiency of Evangelical Dissent, and of the voluntary communions of the United States of America.

I charge the state-church, moreover, with systematically and wickedly opposing, and, as far as possible, preventing other denominations from doing good in this country. I verily believe that, upon the whole, it has hindered others from doing a great deal more good to the souls of men than it has ever accomplished by its own operations; or, in plain terms, that by such constant and effective opposition, it has INDIRECTLY "destroyed many more souls than it has ever saved."

These, I admit, are serious and sweeping accusations against the state-system. I admit too, that they are incapable of any specific confirmation. But they embody my deliberate convictions; and I believe that very many enlightened and holy persons, of different evangelical persuasions, are of the same mind. Declarations and admissions to the like effect have been repeatedly made by competent witnesses within and without the establishment.—I shall quote merely the following:—

REV. ROBERT HALL—"Happy had it been had civil establishments of religion "been USELESS only, instead of being productive of the GREATEST EVILS."

REV. MR. FOSTER—"Religious establishments, in general, have been productive of "more DISMAL EFFECTS to society and mankind, than could possibly have arisen "from any absolute disregard to religious opinions by the civil magistrate, and the "total silence of the law upon that head."

When speaking of the failure of the Church of England, it is necessary to assume some specific objects for which it was originally established. Were it merely for the temporal ease, honour, and aggrandizement of certain privileged classes or individuals; then I allow that, so far from being a failure, it has succeeded beyond all reasonable expectation. But if it were designed to promote the glory of God, the conversion of souls, unanimity in doctrine, uniformity in worship, or any similar supposable object; then I contend that it has been a Miserable Failure.—I shall now show:—

FIRST.—WHEREIN THE CHURCH HAS PROVED EMINENTLY SUCCESSFUL.—Supposing it to have been established for the worldly honour and pecuniary benefit of certain classes and individuals, it has nobly answered its original design.—For instance:—

I. *The ruling powers in the state*—being the legislative and executive head of the church—exercising the prerogatives of God himself—creating bishops and parsons by wholesale—enriching their friends—and strengthening their political interests—will not call the church a failure.

II. *The most and right reverend bishops*—well paid, well fed, with sub-

lime titles—in venerable wigs, mitres, silk aprons, and lawn sleeves—rolling in their emblazoned carriages—seated among the peers—patronizing their relatives—and giving others the Holy Ghost—will not call it a failure.

III. *The deans, prebendaries, canons, &c.* of our cathedrals—with their soft-cushioned stalls, splendid sanctuaries, pompous ceremonials, light labour, large pay, snug dwellings, fawning tradesmen and dependents, and ample self-patronage—do not feel the church to be a failure.

IV. *The chancellors, archdeacons, rural deans,* and other officials of the same popish origin—set down before great loves and fishes, and clothed with a little brief authority over their brethren, which they exercise with a high sense of their own importance—will not call it a failure.

V. *The fat sleek rectors and vicars,* with two or three good livings a piece, and the best houses and gardens in the parish—doing most of their duty by proxies, paid less than gentlemen's valets—and expecting the deaths and posts of right reverend prelates—will not call it a failure.

VI. *The ecclesiastical doctors, proctors, chancellors, registrars, tithe-commissioners, &c.* with the stewards, lawyers, surveyors, architects, &c. of the bishops and chapters—fingering nice pickings out of every body and every thing—are not likely to call the church a failure.

VII. *The heads, wardens, masters, and fellows* of our church-and-state colleges and other great endowed schools—with the attorneys, stewards, cooks, bed-makers, butchers, shoe-makers and menders, tailors, masons, carpenters, bakers, &c.—will not pronounce it a failure.

VIII. *The lay and clerical monopolizers* of our ancient, national, and catholic hospitals and other charities—who get the lion's share of what was left wholly for the poor—and pompously distribute the rest to bribe and proselyte the necessitous—will not deem it a failure.

IX. *The nobility and gentry,* who quarter their younger, light-portioned, and least-gifted, children upon the church militant—making them rich and easy at the national expence—and putting them in a fair way for a mitre and peerage—are not likely to call it a failure.

X. Those who believe that all persons christened in the church are savingly and divinely *regenerated by the Holy Ghost*, and that all who are interred in consecrated ground by a regular priest are *safe for heaven*—of course, will not deem the church a failure.

What many poor curates, with their wives and families, would answer respecting the temporal success of the church, I am not prepared to say. It is possible they might hesitate a little before joining in the applause the preceding classes of conformists naturally raise in favour of their good old apostolical church!—I shall now proceed to explain:—

SECOND.—WHEREIN THE CHURCH HAS SIGNALLY AND MISERABLY FAILED.—Supposing it to have been established and sustained for one, more, or all, of the following purposes, it has been any thing but successful.

I. If to promote nothing but the PURE RELIGION of the New Testament,

it has miserably failed;—for it has also and chiefly promoted sentiments, rites, and practices, having no foundation or countenance in the word of God.

II. If to maintain only the PROTESTANT RELIGION—in opposition to Popery—it has signally failed;—having preserved and promulgated most of the peculiar and distinctive dogmas and ceremonies of Romanism.

III. If to secure DOCTRINAL UNANIMITY in this kingdom, it has sadly failed;—for leaving all Dissenting opinions out of the question, its clergy hold and advocate all the varied creeds of Christendom.

IV. If to enforce NATIONAL UNIFORMITY, it has equally failed;—for, notwithstanding all its laws, canons, courts, and curses, a large proportion of the professing public has wholly left its communion.

V. If to CONVERT THE SOULS of the population, it has awfully failed;—for according to some of its best writers, comparatively few of its own ministers and members are really renewed by divine grace.

VI. If to MORALIZE THE NATION, it has fearfully failed;—for, with many pleasing exceptions, the bulk of avowed and recognized conformists set at defiance every sacred rule of scriptural and genuine morality.

VII. If to ensure *civil obedience* to the powers that be, it has fearfully failed;—for of all the multitudes that crowd our jails, hulks, and penal settlements, nearly all of them are ignorant and criminal episcopalians.

VIII. If to *educate all the young* in the doctrines and principles of the gospel, it has failed;—for the ignorance of the lower classes of conformists, especially in large towns and rural districts, is great and almost universal.

IX. If the *temporal benefit of the poor* were intended, it has grievously failed;—for it has not only robbed them of their ancient ecclesiastical resources, but is now filching them indirectly of several millions a year.

X. If to exhibit *clerical humility*, it has failed;—for, with some few exceptions, a more haughty, vain, conceited, pompous, and overbearing class of national functionaries, is not to be found in the country.

XI. If to manifest *pastoral deadness* to the wealth of the world, it has failed; for the zeal of the priesthood, in grasping the last sheaf, egg, or potatoe that the law allows, is every where notorious.

XII. If to keep up a *competent ministry* in every parish, it has wofully failed;—it being avowed by high-church organs that a large portion of the clergy are “leading their flocks to the chambers of death.”

XIII. If to guarantee the *rights and liberties* of the people, it has failed;—for, of all the institutions in the country, none have so strenuously opposed the extension of civil and religious liberty as the state-church.

XIV. If to preserve *national tranquility*, it is a failure;—for, from its origin to the present moment, it has been a source of more “envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness,” than any other cause whatever.

XV. If to unite PASTOR AND PEOPLE in the bonds of confidence and love, it has also failed;—for of all the social and religious connexions in existence, there is not another so generally destitute of mutual attachment.

XVI. If to draw forth CHRISTIAN LIBERALITY, it has altogether failed;—for it leaves nothing to generosity—it demands your money and will have it to the last farthing—or sell your goods, and send you to jail.

XVII. If to maintain APOSTOLICAL DISCIPLINE, it has also failed;—for it admits the pious and profane alike to all its privileges, and speaks comfort and hope to the most ungodly, as much as to the most devout.

XVIII. If to prevent SPIRITUAL DELUSION, it is a failure;—for it invites all who can repeat the catechism to confirmation—all the confirmed to communion—and sends all its communicants to heaven.

XIX. If to destroy RELIGIOUS FANATICISM, it is a failure;—for its ministers *pretend* to be successors of the apostles—to regenerate all they baptize—to give the Holy Ghost in ordination—and to pardon the vilest sinners.

XX. If to exhibit GOSPEL SIMPLICITY, it is a failure;—witness its altars, grades of clergy, priestly titles and attire, bowings, kneelings, turnings, crossings—with its various other absurd and popish ceremonies!

I might proceed; but further enumerations would be needless. The failure of the law-church is as notorious as it is great and universal—and all this too with at least *Eight millions* a year—with *Fifty thousand* superior or subordinate agents regularly employed—with exclusive national prerogatives—with every thing the prince, the parliament, the peer, the bailiff, the sword, the dungeon, the pillory, and the stake could accomplish on its behalf—and that, too, for more than three hundred years! Indeed, a like failure, under equally favourable circumstances, the world, has scarcely, if ever, witnessed! and never was disaffection to the law-church more rife or general than at the present time, and it is increasing every day. The reasons are palpable; it has *dishonoured* CHRIST, the supreme and exclusive head of his church, and the BIBLE, the only statute-book and guide of the saints—and God, in return has visibly and strikingly dishonoured it!

AS A CONTRAST to the miserable failure of the establishment, look at any leading denomination of evangelical dissent. For though its members have nothing whereof to boast before God, they have much to inspire them with gratitude and joy. They may justly point to their own rapid growth; their holy independence; their internal harmony; their oneness of sentiment in all the important doctrines of the gospel; the extent of their voluntary contributions; the myriads of pious persons that compose their churches, and of children religiously educated in their schools; and the number, abilities, piety, labours, and success of their ministers; and may triumphantly exclaim, “WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT?” “This is the finger of God!”

All this success has been achieved without the patronage, property, or furtherance of the political state; without the smiles or encouragement of the noble and mighty; without the meretricious trappings of a gorgeous and captivating hierarchy; and, in fact, in opposition to the virulent, formidable, and undying hostility of the national priesthood and their obsequious partizans. And our motto and movement are still “ONWARD”—“CONQUERING, and to CONQUER”—“IF GOD BE FOR US, WHO CAN BE AGAINST US.”—Never before did Evangelical DISSENT LOOK SO FAIR, or STAND SO FIRM, as at the PRESENT MOMENT!!

A FRATERNAL ADDRESS TO EVANGELICAL DISSENTERS.

By the Rev. W. THORN, Winchester.

"Let us choose to us judgment; let us know among ourselves what is good."—JOB xxxiv. 4.

I AM aware that numerous excellent addresses, on the subject of Evangelical Nonconformity, have been recently published by dissenting gentlemen of much greater ability, and of far more commanding influence, than myself. But in these stirring times, "precept must be upon precept and line upon line." I would therefore presume that no apology, from even so humble an individual as the writer, will be required for likewise addressing you, in faithful and friendly terms, on this popular and important topic.

Though the present very concise epistle may contain little you have not previously read; it will, I hope, call to mind forgotten sentiments, deepen former impressions, and prompt to duties hitherto imperfectly performed. Read, then, with candour what is written in kindness; apply to yourselves what is intended for your profit; and at once comply with those admonitions which are manifestly based on the commandments of God.

Among so large a body of people as that of the Evangelical Dissenters of this country, there must be various degrees of information and impression on the subject of Nonconformity, and material differences in the manner and spirit in which the principles of dissent are carried out by their advocates.—There are the more and the less ENLIGHTENED on the subject—The more and the less IMPRESSED with its importance—The more and the less CONSISTENT with their profession—And the more and the less ACTIVE in promoting the doctrines they believe to be true.

Hence, it is plain that many observations, applicable to certain descriptions of dissenters, would not be adapted to others of a different character. And as my object is not to enlighten the truly wise, nor to stimulate the sufficiently active, nor to warn the already cautious, nor to wound the piously consistent; I shall more especially direct my subsequent remarks to those who may really need some advice and admonition on the question. Let all Protestant Nonconformists, to whom the ensuing appeals are appropriate, make a candid and faithful application of them to their own consciences and conduct.—I shall notice—

FIRST.—THE NEGLECT OF DUTY WITH WHICH YOU ARE CHARGEABLE.

I. *In not sufficiently studying the question of Nonconformity.*—You entertain some general and vague ideas that the church is in error; that there are a few points in it it not accordant with the word of God; and that, upon the whole, the services of the chapel are more simple, scriptural, and edifying, than those of the state-worship. Perhaps, you are a dissenter from educational habits; or because your friends are so; or because the minister of the chapel is a more able preacher than the parish priest; or because the clergyman may have given you offence; or because the meeting-house is nearer than the church. But such reasons for Nonconformity are imperfect, and embrace not a tithe of the grounds on which enlightened and conscientious dissenters erect their standard of separation. Your dissent is

founded rather on convenience than conviction, and assumes the character of a passion or predilection, instead of a great principle of spiritual operation.

II. *In not duly inculcating its principles in your families.*—You are, doubtless, anxious about the moral deportment and eternal salvation of your children. You endeavour to guard them against temptation, and to guide them to a throne of grace. They bow with you around the domestic altar, and you take them with you to the house of God. You show them the beauties of a Christian life, and the amiableness of a holy temper. But you seldom or never converse with them on the many gross corruptions and false doctrines of the national religion, nor explain to them wherein evangelical dissent differs from the state-worship. They may presume that you prefer the chapel, because you generally attend it. But the specific reasons for your doing so, they are left to conjecture. Nor are you very particular as to whether you commit their education to a conformist, who takes his pupils to church every Sunday, and teaches them the heretical Church Catechism every week; or to a pious dissenter, who conducts his charge to the chapel, and instructs them in the pure doctrines of the gospel.

III. *In not zealously endeavouring to enlighten your fellow-countrymen.*—Rarely do you speak to any of them on the evils of the law-system, or explain to them wherein it is opposed to the word of God, or the sin and danger of attending its services. Though frequent opportunities for discussion, the most favourable and inviting, are offered, they are seldom embraced. Even when dissent is assailed, you rather parry the question than boldly and honestly maintain your scriptural profession. Few are the books you lend, or the tracts you circulate, on Nonconformity. All your neighbours can infer, from your efforts, is that your estimate of the church is *all but* as high as that of the chapel. At all events, they could never gather, from your conduct, that the difference between them was so wide and momentous as is actually the case; or that you regard a false doctrine as equally pernicious with an ordinary falsehood.

IV. *In not fairly encouraging those who are actively engaged in this work.*—Happily, all dissenters are not of your class; or the cause you practically espouse—the cause of Scriptural Christianity—would soon be overwhelmed by the zeal and industry of conformists, acting on the fears and ignorance of the people. But so far from abetting these advocates of Protestant Nonconformity, you rather stand as obstacles in their way. They are discouraged by your apathy, and frequently hindered by your side-wind opposition. You appear anxious to free yourselves from the odium attached to the open abettors of the institutions and arrangements of the primitive churches. Nor does this indifference or hostility apply only to some particular mode of effecting the object, but to nearly every measure which candid and consistent dissenters adopt against the national church.

SECOND.—THE INFLUENCE THAT PRODUCES THIS SINFUL APATHY.

1. *Ignorance of the vast importance of the question.*—Were you fully aware of the dishonour done to God, his word, and his cause, by the state-system, assuredly you could never be so inactive as you are—it would be utterly impossible.

II. *An unjustifiable aversion to religious controversy*,—as if it were incompatible with spirituality and peace of mind, and must necessarily injure their temper and souls.—You forget that the apostles of Christ “disputed,” and preached the truth amidst perpetual “contention.”

III. *A paralyzing intimacy with highly esteemed episcopalians*.—You fancy that to be familiar with them, and to assail their creed, assault their prejudices, and condemn their profession, would be exceedingly unpolite and unkind—and therefore, you are respectfully silent.

IV. *A deadening confidence in the goodness of your cause*.—You probably suppose that your ecclesiastical views are so plain, so prominent, and so scriptural, that they must prevail, without any serious efforts on your part, to explain, defend, or diffuse them.

V. *The silly dread of being pronounced bigoted and sectarian*.—You imagine that this would be disreputable in the last degree—though your Lord and his disciples wore such honours long before—and yet to escape it wholly, you must quit the chapel entirely.

VI. *The fear of personal inconvenience or pecuniary sacrifice*.—You apprehend that the clergy and their partizans, on whom you may, in some degree, rely for support might withdraw their favours; or that any efficient and active endeavours would incur a little personal expence.

Of course, all the above motives will not apply to the same individual; but it may be safely concluded, that under one or other of them every lukewarm dissenter is acting—which it is, he can easily determine for himself.—I proceed to specify,—

THIRD.—THE PERNICIOUS CONSEQUENCES OF SUCH INDIFFERENCE.

I. *You can have no denominational stability in yourselves*.—A mere trifle will draw or drive you from a profession, not founded in conviction and principle, which offers you no superior secular advantages, and especially so in times of persecution. Nor will others every regard you as a pillar in the dissenting temple.

II. *Your neglected children will probably apostatize to the establishment*.—Should the grace of God change their heart, they will most likely continue dissenters. But if not, they will prefer the license, gaiety, and worldliness of the state-party; and, as thousands have done before, will ultimately unite with it, or give up the forms of godliness altogether.

III. *For you, the errors of the endowed church would be perpetual*.—That these are great and fearful, I have elsewhere fully demonstrated. To counteract them effectually, the public mind must be fully instructed in their nature and tendencies. This you fail to do, and thereby tolerate their sad and lasting operation.

IV. *You tamely connive at the dishonour of Christ and his holy word*.—The state-church virtually dethrones the Saviour, renders void his supreme commands, and disfranchises his spiritual citizens. This you daily witness; toward this you pay your money—cheerfully or reluctantly; and yet to oppose its impiety you make no serious or appropriate efforts.

V. *You tacitly sanction the destruction of immortal souls*.—The system and ceremonies of the church delude the people, hinder the gospel of Christ, substitute water-regeneration for that of the Spirit, forms for saving faith, profession for piety; and yet you show no adequate indignation at it, and occasionally complain of those that do, as too meddling and severe.

VI. *You bring your own wisdom or sincerity into question*.—You will be charged with either dissenting without sufficient reasons, or with caring little about the ignorance and sin of those who continue to conform; with needlessly leaving the church, or unrighteously holding your peace. From one or other of these accusations you cannot possibly escape.

FOURTH.—YOUR DUTIES AND ENCOURAGEMENTS FOR THE FUTURE.

I. YOUR DUTIES:—These are clearly implied in the statements previously given of your apathy and neglect:—1. Study well the question before us in all its properties and applications.—2. Train up your children in the full knowledge of dissenting principles; show them the errors and evils of the church; the gospel nature of protestant nonconformity; and never send them to any schools where the church catechism is taught, or attendance at church is expected.—3. Use all prudent and earnest endeavours to instruct your neighbours and fellow subjects in the great and essential difference between the national church and the Holy Scriptures, and the accordance of the latter with evangelical dissent.—4. And, finally, encourage and assist those who take an active and expensive part in this important struggle against the endowed sect.

II. YOUR ENCOURAGEMENTS:—These are various and great:

1. *The improved ability of the people to understand the subject.*—The capacity for reading and reasoning was never so large and general before in this country. Hence you have an audience to comprehend and judge of what you advance; and in the end it will give you an honest verdict.

2. *The wide circulation of the Scriptures, as a ground of appeal.*—These are now in nearly every house. And whatever Puseyites and their party may advance, the body of the people regard them as the sole and sufficient laws of the christian church—and to be exclusively obeyed.

3. *The extending interest felt in all church questions.*—It is more or less agitated in almost every paper and periodical, is made the theme of conversation in almost every house, and the topic of grave dispute in the senate of the land—most men are now alive to the subject.

4. *The more recent admissions of the bishops and clergy.*—These fully concede the truth of most of the charges brought by dissenters against the establishment. It cannot now be denied that the church is, upon the whole, what its enlightened opponents have ever and openly described it.

5. *The growing disaffection towards the endowed system.*—Never was this so rife and universal as at present, and it is rapidly extending, and will increase every year. The causes of it are manifest, and will operate most beneficially in advancing scriptural principles among us.

6. *The word of God is with us and will insure success.*—That it is not with the church is clear from its advocates fleeing to tradition, popery, priestcraft, political expediency, and the like, for its support. To these we need not go. We have God on our side, and our ultimate triumph is sure.

IN CONCLUSION: let all evangelical dissenters fully and righteously exert themselves in this great cause, as they might and ought to do (as their sainted predecessors have done before them;) and from the purity of their principles, the greatness of their numbers, the extent of their wealth, and the weight of their moral and religious characters; it may be reasonably assumed, that the corrupt and pernicious establishment, with all its riches, dignities, and ramifications, will soon totter to its foundation, and make way for the erection of other institutions, more accordant with genuine protestantism, the gospel of Christ, the welfare of souls, and the christian liberties of all British Subjects.

EPISCOPAL CONFIRMATION, UNSCRIPTURAL AND PERNICIOUS.

A LETTER to the REV. A. DALLAS, RECTOR of WONSTON, Hants.

By the Rev. W. THORN, Winchester.

REV. SIR,

I have recently met with a number of Tracts on Episcopal Confirmation, addressed by you to the parishioners of Wonston, and circulated widely in neighbouring places, if not generally throughout the country.

In these publications you have assumed positions, and drawn conclusions from them, respecting this POPISH SERVICE both at variance with Scripture, and calculated to do irreparable injury to ignorant and confiding young persons, of which, unhappily, vast numbers are to be found in your apostolical state-church.

To counteract the pernicious influence of your addresses on this subject, is the purport of the present paper. I intend, however, rather to examine the question as stated in your ecclesiastical authorities, and practised generally in your denomination, than as expounded in some of your pages, or exhibited at Wonston. The necessary brevity of this tract prevents my noticing numerous unimportant and irrelative observations found in your pastoral epistles.—I contend, then,

FIRST.—THAT YOUR EPISCOPAL CONFIRMATION IS WHOLLY UNSCRIPTURAL—being warranted neither by the letter nor the spirit of the Bible.

The 60th Canon of your church says, “Confirmation hath been a solemn, ancient, and laudible custom in the church of God, continued from the Apostles’ times;” and so say you and most of your brethren. When we ask for the scriptural authority on which it is founded, DR. COMBER and others gravely refer us to the following texts:—Acts viii. 14-15; xiv. 22; xv. 41; xix. 1-7; and Heb. vi. 1-2; as the warrant for laying on of hands and confirming the young. But it is clear that whatever practices these passages may support, your Episcopal Confirmation can derive no countenance from them.

I. AS TO “LAYING ON OF HANDS;” it was evidently done immediately, or as soon as possible, after baptism, whether the subjects were youthful or adult. There was no intermediate state of scholarship, or of catechetical instruction. Whereas, in your denomination, a space of fifteen or more years almost universally intervenes between the rites of Baptism and Confirmation.

Again, when it is said the Apostles “laid their hands” on the baptized, two things are evident—(1) That it was not done in all cases, or even to a majority of their converts; and (2) That when it was done, MIRACULOUS GIFTS were the intended result. A careful examination of the texts above referred to will convince all candid and intelligent readers as to the truth of these conclusions.

It is equally manifest that by “laying on of hands,” the apostles did not pretend to convey the converting, sanctifying, and saving influences of the Holy Spirit. These being infinitely more important and valuable to the souls of men than the gift of tongues, were not thus to be communicated even by the inspired followers of Christ.

These facts being established, it follows—(1) That as prelates cannot confer the miraculous or minor gifts, it is presumptuous in them to pretend to confer the greater, or sanctifying grace.—(2) That to lay their hands on all christened by clergymen is contrary to the practice of the apostles, who laid their hands only on some, perhaps but a few, of the baptized. And—(3) That to lay hands on persons baptized from ten to twenty years previously, bears no analogy to the laying of hands on heads

still wet with the baptismal water. IT IS MORE LIKE MAKING PARSONS THAN CHRISTIANS OF THEM!!!

I beg also to observe that the apostles, AS SUCH, could have had no successors at all; and that EVERY good minister of the gospel is EQUALLY a successor of these holy men in their ministerial capacity. Therefore, to limit the administration of this ordinance to MITRED PRELATES, IS ALTOGETHER UNWARRANTED.—A “PRIMITIVE” PREACHER COULD CONFIRM THE YOUNG QUITE AS WELL AS BISHOP SUMNER!!

The Rev. T. SCOTT, being of deservedly high authority with most evangelical clergymen, I may be allowed to quote his sentiments in support of my own:—“The ‘rite of Confirmation, as practised by many Christian churches, has often been, and ‘still is spoken of, as a continuation of this apostolical imposition of hands, for the ‘confirmation of new converts, by the Holy Spirit thus given to them. But it is far ‘from evident that this was done universally by the apostles, or by those who immediately succeeded them. As, however, MIRACULOUS POWERS, rather than SANC-TIFYING GRACE, were thus conferred; unless miraculous powers were now con-nected with that rite, THE PARALLEL MUST WHOLLY FAIL.”—On ACTS viii. 14-17.

II. As to “CONFIRMING THE CHURCHES,” (Acts xv. 41,) or “Confirming the ‘souls of the disciples,” (xiv. 22,) these scriptures give not the slightest countenance to your Episcopal Confirmation. All that the language fairly conveys is, that “they exhorted them to continue in the faith;” and strengthened and encouraged them amidst “the tribulations through which they were to enter the kingdom.” There is not the least intimation of their laying on of hands, or of doing any thing beside preaching the gospel to them, and imploring the grace of God on their behalf. One fact is also apparent, that this kind of Confirmation was administered not by apostles only, or even by ordinary congregational bishops, but also by gifted members of the first churches—of which Judas and Silas were decided examples. Acts xv. 32.

On the whole, I confidently conclude, that your Episcopal Confirmation is wholly unscriptural; and I fearlessly challenge you, or any of your clerical brethren, to prove that the positions I have taken are not perfectly tenable.—I argue,

SECONDLY.—THAT YOUR EPISCOPAL CONFIRMATION IS HIGHLY PERNICIOUS—and calculated to do fifty times more harm than good.

I. *It is an imposition on the judgment respecting the word of God.* The pledged and paid advocates of the parliamentary religion appear to feel bound to support all their superstitious ceremonies, laws, and notions, by an appeal to divine revelation; and to father all their errors, inventions, and Puseyism, upon the Holy Ghost himself. Hence it is, either directly or by implication, impressed upon the minds of your credulous hearers, That godfathers and godmothers, with their promises and vows, are scriptural! That the cross in baptism is scriptural! That bowing *at* the name of Jesus is scriptural! And that the union of Church and State, a national liturgy, lord-bishops, deans, &c., a coercively paid priesthood, and last, though not least, your Confirmation, are all scriptural! But this is all an imposition—deceiving and deluding the people who confide in your instruction; for they are no more scriptural than worshipping images or praying to the dead.

II. *It indirectly reflects on the wisdom and goodness of God.* It being both proved and admitted that your confirmation is not from heaven, one would hardly have expected to hear it lauded and commended as of essential advantage to the souls of mankind, and absolutely prerequisite to communion in the Christian Church. And yet this is avowedly the fact; and, in accordance with it, the most zealous and strenuous efforts are made by the state priesthood to get the young confirmed—frequently greater than to lead

them to faith in Christ or holiness of life. *Wheatly* says, "*The bishops . . . sue to heaven for the blessings they bestow . . . and precious gifts are hereby conferred.*" *Hooker* imputes to his ordinance, "*that gift or grace of the Holy Ghost which assisteth us in all virtue, armeth us against temptation and sin.*" And you can speak of it as being precisely of the same opinion. Surely then the Almighty must have been deficient in not clearly instituting and defining this most important rite! And yet you well know that there are few drunkards, thieves, debauchees, &c. who have not received "this gift or grace," and been *thus* "armed against temptation and sin!"

III. *It supposes that unconfirmed persons are not responsible for their conduct.* This "order is very convenient to be observed to the end that children being now come to years of discretion, and having learned what their godfathers and godmothers *promised for them* in baptism, they may themselves, with their own mouth and consent, openly before the church ratify and confirm the same, and promise that by the grace of God they will evermore endeavour *themselves* faithfully to observe such things as they by their own confession have assented unto." Looking at your baptism, sponsorship, and confirmation, as parts of one entire system, such an inference is natural, if not absolutely necessary; and is drawn by large numbers of young persons, who defer their confirmation as long as possible that they may sin without being personally accountable for it! The demoralizing influence of this doctrine requires no exposition from me.

IV. *It pledges the young to an erroneous and miserably defective faith.* They are made to say that they renew the solemn promise and vow made in their name at baptism, and to acknowledge themselves "bound to believe and to do all those things which their godfathers and godmothers then undertook for them." This belief is contained (1) In what is *falsely* called the "Apostles' Creed," which, while it perverts the sense of scripture, "maintains a deep, dead silence on the important and fundamental doctrines of the Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures—Original Sin—the Atonement—Justification by Faith—and the nature and necessity of Good Works;" and (2) In other parts of the Catechism which are highly objectionable, and only adapted to mislead the mind and foster the most antichristian sentiments. But to all this the young are pledged—and to this only—and so pledged as to partake of the nature of an oath which they are sure to violate, and thereby to perjure their precious souls.

V. *It is an unscriptural bar to the reception of the Lord's Supper.* "And there shall none be admitted to the Holy Communion, until such times as he be confirmed, or be ready or desirous to be confirmed." Thus it makes the previous adoption of an unscriptural rite requisite to the reception of a divinely appointed ordinance. On the same principle your church might have as justly decreed that none should communicate till they were full thirty, or lawfully married! The holiest person in the country, if he have not been confirmed, or if he object to this human and popish institution, is, by the laws of your church, prevented from approaching the Lord's table, or from being recognized as a full member of your society.

VI. *It is unrighteously made a canonical test of christian character.*—“To discriminate who are proper to be admitted to the Holy Sacrament,” as true and spiritual members of the Church of Christ. But what is first required of these young people? Simply, “To say in their mother tongue, “the Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and also to be “able to answer to the other questions of the Short Catechism.” Having made this mighty attainment—the task of a few days at most—they can claim to be confirmed—to be addressed as regenerate and forgiven—and to communicate at the Lord’s Table! They may know nothing of religion experimentally—may be “careless and impenitent”—may be living far from God by wicked works; yet, being confirmed, they are immediately recognized as members of your church—are admitted to full communion, and are subsequently treated, addressed, and buried, as the children of God!

VII. *It gives them a most erroneous view of the effects of baptism.*—The Bishop reads audibly, and in their hearing, the following prayer:—“Almighty and everlasting God, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these “thy servants by water and the Holy Ghost, and hast given unto them “forgiveness of sins,” &c. This is said of all present indiscriminately—the good (if any) and the bad—of all who can repeat the short catechism—the attendants on a pious or a heterodox ministry—or on none at all! He has the courage to say this of young people he never saw before, and of whose religious character he knows literally nothing! and to that God who knows he is uttering a most fearful and pernicious untruth!

VIII. *It sinfully assures them all, that they are special favourites of Heaven.* “We make our humble supplications unto Thee for these thy servants, upon whom (after the example of thy holy apostles) we have now laid our “hands to certify them (by this sign) of thy FAVOUR and GRACIOUS GOODNESS towards “them.” How the bishop can muster sufficient daring and hardihood to venture such an heretical declaration respecting a crowd of unconverted and, perhaps titting, boys and girls—or be so lost to all real concern for the welfare of the young as to let them hear it, is surprising in the extreme; or how any Bible Christian can stand by and countenance it, is to me marvellous indeed! This I will venture to assert, that the rankest Socialism exhibits nothing more profane, or better calculated to cherish false and delusive hopes in the minds of the people!!

Did space permit, I might enlarge on the fun, revelry, drunkenness, swearing, fighting, debauchery, &c. which too commonly attend a confirmation. For though such wicked and disgraceful doings are not necessarily connected with this antisciptural ceremony—the ignorance, folly, and profligacy of most of the candidates, especially in rural districts, RENDER THEM NATURAL AND ALMOST INEVITABLE. Well might Mr. SCOTT observe, “ASSUREDLY AS THIS MATTER IS GENERALLY MANAGED, IT MUST BE ALLOWED TO BE AN EVIL; AND IT OUGHT TO BE ATTENDED TO “IN ANOTHER MANNER, OR NOT AT ALL.” In conclusion, I observe—

1. That Evangelical Dissenters may congratulate themselves that this stupid, irreligious, and soul-deceiving service, nor any thing like it is practised among them.

2. That parents and guardians who allow their children to be confirmed, directly countenance antichristian delusion, and aid the enemy of souls in injuring their charge.

3. That the young are bound to resist every clerical or other persuasion and threat, to induce compliance with a service which is so unscriptural and full of mischief.

4. And that you, Sir, should call in and *burn all the tracts* you have sent out recommending the young to be confirmed; and should earnestly pray to God to forgive the sins, and to counteract the evils, you may have occasioned by such delusive publications.

PRIESTLY ABSOLUTION IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

A SECOND LETTER to the Rev. A. DALLAS, Rector of Wonston, Hants.

By the Rev. W. THORN, Winchester.

REV. SIR,

My former letter was occasioned by perusing several of your tracts on "EPISCOPAL CONFIRMATION." I hope you have carefully and candidly weighed my arguments—have fully felt their force—and are now diligently acting on the suggestion contained in the concluding paragraph.

I take the liberty of addressing this letter to you also, because of the manifest interest you have recently taken in my previous publications on "THE ERRORS AND EVILS OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND;" and on account of the publicity you have given them in your parish and neighbourhood. I trust you will advertise the present in a similar manner!

The topic of immediate discussion is "PRIESTLY ABSOLUTION" in the Church of England.—In "The order for the visitation of the sick," are the following words:—

"OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, WHO HATH LEFT POWER TO HIS CHURCH TO
"ABSOLVE ALL SINNERS WHO TRULY REPENT AND BELIEVE IN HIM, OF HIS
"GREAT MERCY FORGIVE THEE THINE OFFENCES; AND BY HIS AUTHORITY
"COMMITTED TO ME, I ABSOLVE THEE FROM ALL THY SINS, IN THE NAME OF
"THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST. AMEN."

On this quotation from your venerable, incomparable, immaculate Prayer Book, I shall make a few observations:—

FIRST.—I SHALL PROPOSE FOUR VERY IMPORTANT QUESTIONS:—

I. *What church possesses this power of absolving sinners?*—Are the churches of France—Spain—Austria—and Scotland true churches of Christ, and invested with this eminent prerogative the same as the Church of England? There are also churches much older than your own, as the Greek—Ethiopic—Armenian—Romish—and Syrian; have all these the like power to absolve sinners? There are also Presbyterian—Independent—Baptist—and Wesleyan Churches, each nearly if not quite as numerous as your own; are these likewise true Christian churches and equally entrusted with the keys of the kingdom of heaven? If not, adduce your arguments in support of a negative assumption.

II. *Who possesses this absolving power in your denomination?*—The XIXth Article describes the church to be "A congregation of faithful men." Have your *members* then authority to pardon their penitent neighbours? The XXth Article says, "The Church hath power to decree rites
"and ceremonies, and authority in controversies of faith." Now, this power is really and constitutionally vested in the *Queen and Parliament*. Have these the prerogative also to forgive sins against God? Or is it lodged with the *bishops and clergy*? If so, where are they designated a church, either

in law or in the word of God; or in what sense do they constitute a Christian church distinct from their people? If you personally possess this power, how came you by it, and "who gave you this authority?"

III. *What kind and degree of piety are prerequisite for absolution?*—Suppose a person has been neither christened nor confirmed in your church—suppose he have generally neglected public and domestic worship, and lived in a daily and open violation of the laws of God; and suppose in the time of sickness and under the fear of death, he be induced verbally to avow "his stedfast belief" in the apostles' creed, to say "he truly repents of his sins," is "in charity with all the world," and "humbly and heartily desireth" absolution;—is he not, without any further attainment or confession, canonically entitled to be absolved, and is not the law-priest bound to do it? Your reply in the affirmative I fully anticipate.—But, as an experienced Christian, are you prepared to express your belief that these are conclusive or satisfactory evidences of a change of heart or of meetness for heaven? If not, you absolve a being whom the word of God most righteously condemns!

IV. *Do you not virtually administer extreme unction to the sick and dying*—not, I admit, in the precise mode of the Romish Church, but to the like effect? The sick person is to be moved to make a "SPECIAL CONFESSION" to the Priest, who shall then "absolve him from all his sins, and give him the" Holy "Sacrament—to the intent that he may be "always in readiness to die." And are not the attendants then generally requested to keep him quiet, and particularly to allow no dissenter to see him, lest his peace be disturbed? If so, is not this extreme unction to all intents and purposes? I wait your reply.

SECONDLY.—I SHALL NOW ADDUCE SIX SERIOUS ACCUSATIONS:—

I. *I charge your church with borrowing this rite from Popery*—and not from the sacred writings. The Romish absolution reads thus: "*Our Lord Jesus Christ absolve thee; and by his authority, I absolve thee from thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.*" You have, indeed, enlarged and strengthened it, by inserting the term "all;" (including every "*deadly*" as well as every "*venial*" sin against God,) but both formularies are essentially the same; hence you are indebted to what you condemn as a most corrupt system, for one of its most antichristian ceremonies—as, indeed, you are for nearly all the peculiar orders, forms, and ceremonies, of your endowed communion. The Bible never furnished you with this absolution service—as you know full well.

II. *I charge all honest clergymen with really believing in priestly absolution.*—They have all made the following declaration: "That the book of "*Common Prayer* and the *Ordination* of bishops and deacons containeth in "it nothing contrary to the word of God." (Canon 36.) Now, the Prayer-book containeth the absolution service previously cited, and, of course, is agreeable to scripture! And in the Ordination Service the Prelate says, "whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven, and whose sins thou dost "retain, they are retained;" to which doctrine they give their hearty assent.

The inference is, that if the clergy are intelligent and honest, they assuredly believe in priestly absolution, and themselves qualified to administer it!

III. *I charge them with really pretending to forgive sin*—whenever they read this service to the sick and dying. That the words employed are not a mere *declaration* of what they pray for, or of what the Saviour is supposed to have done, is manifest from the following considerations.—(1.) That this is the only grammatical sense the language will bear, or that an ordinary hearer would ever attach to it.—(2.) That if it do not contain priestly absolution it is perfectly superfluous, and would not have been inserted.—(3.) That if it meant a mere declaration of what the Almighty does, any one might officially use it as well as a priest, which is strictly prohibited.—And (4.) That you invariably put a similar construction on the Romish Absolution, which is less comprehensive and forcible than your own. In fact, no clerical glosses can explain away the truth of this straight-forward interpretation of the passage in question.

IV. *I charge them with assuming divine prerogatives*.—That God only can really forgive sin, is a position which no genuine Bible-christian will deny. Yet they pretend to do it also. They utter language as strong, as personal, and as explicit as any the divine Being has ever used in pardoning the guilty. They employ it, too, frequently in reference to persons known to have no more genuine heartfelt religion than a brute; while, alas! some of themselves are but unconverted sinners in state-canonicals. If this be not the man of sin, who “as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing ‘himself that he is God,’” I know not whither we must go to find him.

V. *I charge them with encouraging the grossest priestcraft*.—This absolution can be legally effected only by prelatically ordained clergymen; and these without exception can do it. More than this, they only are the true official successors of the Apostles! They only can regenerate the baptized; give the Holy Ghost in Confirmation; efficiently administer the Sacraments; or even properly marry a young couple! Hence, among their ignorant parishioners, they are most important, powerful, and imposing personages! And, naturally enough, do they and their untutored devotees look down with supercilious contempt on dissenting pastors, who—whatever be their talents, attainments, or ministerial success—cannot regenerate men’s souls, give them the Holy Spirit, or pardon their transgressions!

VI. *I charge them with fatally deluding their congregations*.—When they visit the sick and dying, and (*as in duty bound*) read this absolution service, they cause them to conclude that their sins are actually forgiven, and their souls rendered safe for ever; at least, this must be the case, unless their patients regard the clergy as simpletons or hypocrites—attempting or pretending to effect what they cannot perform. Though the people may be strangers to a change of heart, and destitute of faith in Christ, love to God, or obedience to his will, and implore mercy merely through fear of immediate punishment; yet you treat them all as saints and pronounce them forgiven! Thus, they are lulled into a dreadful security, from which they may never awake till alarmed by the horrors of eternal destruction!

THIRDLY.—I SHALL FINALLY GIVE YOU A FEW ADMONITIONS:—

I. *Be silent respecting the errors and evils of all other sects*—at least, till your own are wholly removed or materially diminished. While this Absolution Service remains in your prayer-book—forming a part of your creed—and while it is read to your sick parishioners; you should be dumb with silence respecting the corruptions of every other section of Christians—even of Popery itself. Moreover, if you reflect on the heresies and absurdities contained in your Baptismal, Catechetical, Confirmation, Marriage, Ordination, and Burial Services, you must cease to condemn the least scriptural and the most heterodox dissenting sect in the kingdom.—Forget not “the mote and the beam!”

II. *Quit the law-church without a moment's delay.*—While you remain within its polluted pale, you must tacitly sanction and indirectly commend all its delusive errors; you must appear as the avowed abettor of the establishment without exception, as to any of its orders, rites, or arrangements; and you will thereby induce your people to conclude that you regard the whole as scriptural and pure. The natural effects will probably follow—they will cordially approve and zealously adopt it also. Further, you cannot christen a child, catechise a youth, or bury a corpse, without committing sin, and doing extensive mischief. Therefore, if you would minister in holy things without sin, you must forsake the Church of England.

III. *Endeavour to undeceive your poor deluded people.*—For many years you have been initiating them into most fearful and pernicious errors—not intentionally or knowingly, but through ignorance or inconsideration. But being now better informed, you are bound, if possible, to undo all the evils you have occasioned. Let no time, then, be lost, ere you call them together, and explain to them the unscriptural and antichristian doctrines and rites of your Popish or Puseyite system. Assure them that “*the Bible, and the Bible only, is the religion of real protestants*”—that the fathers of the church were miserable interpreters of divine truth—and that Kings, Lords, and Commons have no business to legislate in spiritual matters, or to deprive any man of full and entire religious liberty and equality. Till this be done you cannot be free from the blood of your parishioners.

IV. *Implore the mercy of God for your official transgressions.*—With all your good intentions, your piety, and your zeal for God; as a priest at the national altar, you have been grievously sinning against heaven. From the desk, at least, you have been preaching “another gospel;” at the font you have taught *baptismal regeneration*; in catechising, you have deceived the young; at the grave, you have deluded the attendants; and in the chamber of death, you have, by your absolution, fearfully misled the dying—at least, this is true, if you are not a singular exception to the great body of the clergy, and if you have acted in accordance with your official obligations. Seek, then, the pardon of your clerical transgressions and sin no more.—I am serious and in earnest.—May God direct you into all truth, and bless you with courage to do his will!

THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER SUPERSTITIOUS AND HERETICAL.

By the Rev. W. THORN, Winchester.

“Inasmuch as your lordships [the bishops] insist on, as prerequisite to ordination, “subscription to the proposition, ‘THAT THE PRAYER BOOK CONTAINETH “NOTHING CONTRARY TO SCRIPTURE;’ I accuse your lordships of exacting from “every candidate for the national ministry SUBSCRIPTION to a FALSE-“HOOD!!”—REV. E. HEAD, RECTOR OF FENITON, DEVON.

There is no portion of the state-religion ‘more ardently lauded, than “The Book of Common Prayer.” While certain devout church-folks reluctantly admit the existence of serious evils in the orders, dependence, discipline, support, &c. of their system; they refer us with manifest exultation and triumph to this manual of christian worship. It is their venerable and incomparable guide to the altar of God—casting into the shade all the religious exercises and ordinances of Dissenters; and they resent any attack upon it, much more than the rudest assaults made on the Holy Scriptures.

Under these circumstances, Nonconformists are imperatively called upon to develop what they regard as “Superstitious and Heretical” in the Prayer Book, in order to show their reasons for rejecting it, and the grounds of their reluctance to support a cause in which it holds so conspicuous a position. I purpose, therefore, in the present paper, to enumerate a few of the more objectionable portions of this motley compilation, in order to establish the doctrine assumed in the title of this essay.

FIRST.—*I shall make several indisputable PROPOSITIONS respecting the PRAYER BOOK.*

I. The numerous and momentous errors and superstitious ordinances of this work are such as might be reasonably expected from the known fact, That it was compiled from Catholic Mass Books—by men imperfectly versed in the principles of the gospel—acting under the dictation of semi-popish princes—and consulting the popish prejudices of an ignorant people.

II. The Prayer-Book—however lauded by certain unenlightened churchmen and over-courteous dissenters—has been more objected to and condemned by learned and good men than any other publication, written by evangelical protestant divines, for the last 300 years; and more wise and conscientious persons have suffered for opposing and rejecting it, than for assailing the word of God, or any religious works of human composition.

III. It has caused more mental distress to enlightened clergymen and pious lay conformists than any other evil in the law-church; has driven thousands of ministers, and hundreds of thousands of hearers, from the establishment; and there is scarcely an intelligent and holy episcopalian living who does not earnestly desire many material alterations in it.

IV. It may be safely asserted, that if the word of God really be our sole and sufficient guide in all religious matters, the Prayer-Book contains more antichristian doctrine and more superstitious rites and notions than are to

be found in all the theological writings, sacraments, and services of all the Independent, Baptist, and Wesleyan books and ordinances put together.

V. The advocates of the state-liturgy are not entitled to plead the quotations of scripture it contains as evidence of an equality with the prayers and services of evangelical dissenters; as the latter embrace an equal or ample amount of God's word in their religious services, without the admixture of heretical sentiments to counteract their beneficial operation.

VI. It will not be denied that two or three leading errors in a work effectually mar and ruin the entire volume, however unexceptionable all the rest of it may be. A rejection of the atonement would stamp with condemnation any book on the Christian religion. One lie in a speech would fairly vitiate the whole. The fly in the apothecary's pot is not rendered innoxious by the ointment, but the ointment is spoiled by the fly.

VII. A treatise containing important truth and pernicious error is far more dangerous to the generality of readers than another in which all is grossly heretical; as the difference between the bad and the good is not easily detected, and as the former receives a colouring and sanction from the latter. The sweetened poison is swallowed without suspicion.

VIII. Any work, however pregnant with error and superstition, if it can plead the antiquity of three centuries—the approval and use of mighty kings and rulers—the plaudits of grave and learned divines—a constant reading in splendid erections, by dignified clergymen in canonical robes—and an association with great wealth and venerable names—is sure to have the admiration and support of a confiding and unenlightened people.

IX. A humanly devised form of prayer, however excellent, if imposed on a religious community by acts of parliament, is unquestionably opposed to the spirit and examples of the New Testament, and should be resisted, like every other authoritative innovation in christianity, by all persons jealous of their spiritual freedom, resolute in their fidelity to Christ, and confident in the truth, completeness, and sufficiency of divine revelation.

X. All the antisciptural rites and notions of the Prayer-book are as binding on genuine conformists as the most important christian truth it contains. This work is issued as a whole; every word—as in an act of parliament—is of equal authority; every sentiment is stamped with the seal of the legislature; and it is to be received entire—as a bible christian receives the word of God, or as an act of parliament is regarded by all loyal subjects.

SECONDLY.—*The gross POPIISH SUPERSTITIONS of the PRAYER BOOK.*

I. The arrangement, dates, and designations of the Lord's Day.

Sundays of Advent	First Sunday in Lent	Palm Sunday
Sundays after Christmas	Rogation Sunday	Septuagissima
Sundays after Epiphany	Trinity Sunday	Sexagissima
Sundays after Easter	Shrove Sunday	Quinquagissima
The Ascension day	Low Sunday	Quadragesima, &c.!!

II. Table of feasts to be observed throughout the year.

The Circumcision	All Saints	The Holy Innocents
The Epiphany	All Souls	Whit-monday and Tuesday
Conversion of Paul	Invention of the Cross	Easter-monday and Tuesday
The Purification	St. Michael and All Angels	The evens and vigils before, &c.!!
The Annunciation	The Nativity of the Baptist	

III. *Days of fasting and abstinence every year.*

Forty days of Lent

All Fridays in the year

Three Rogation days—being Monday,

Tuesday, and Wednesday before

Holy Thursday

Ember days—being Wednesday, Friday, and

Saturday after the

First Sunday in Lent

The Feast of Pentecost

The 14th of September

The 13th of December!!

To which may be added the following solemn and ever memorable days:—

The 5th of November, or Gunpowder Plot day!

The 30th of January, OR PIOUS King Charles the MARTYR!

The 29th of May, or the restoration of GOOD King Charles II.!

IV. *A number of Saint's days to be annually observed.*

St. Agnes	St. Boniface	St. Etheldreda	St. Lammas	St. Perpetua
Alban	Britius	Fabian	Leonard	Prisca
Alphege	Catharine	Faith	Lawrence	Remegius
Ambrose	Cecilia	Denys	Lucy	Richard
Anne	Charles, K.	Dunstan	Machutus	Silvester
Athaga	Chad	George	Margaret	Swithun
Becket	Clement	Giles	Martin	Valentine
Bede	Crispin	Gregory	Nichomede	Vincent
Benedict	Edmund	Hugh	Nicholas	&c.!!
Blaise	Enurhus	Lambert	Patrick	&c.!!

V. *The minute and childish directions of the Rubric*—as if the minister and people were too ignorant to worship God properly, unless directed in every iota by the state.—See particularly in the sacraments and special services of the church. “The minister shall read with a *loud voice* some one “or more of these sentences.”—“Then shall be read *distinctly*, and with an *audible voice*.”—“The absolution or remission of sins to be pronounced by “the priest *alone, standing*, the people still *kneeling*.”—“Then shall be “said or *sung* the Apostles’ Creed by the ministers and people *standing*!” “Before any lesson the minister shall say, Here beginneth such a chapter, “or verse of such a chapter of such a book; and after every lesson, Here “endeth the first or second lesson!” At the Lord’s supper, “The Priest “must *lay his hand* upon all the bread, and upon every vessel in which “there is wine to be consecrated,” that the holy virtues he received at his ordination may, by personal contact, be conveyed to the sacred elements!!

VI. *There are numerous other instances of similar superstition.*—I have space only to refer to the following:—“As it was in the beginning, is “now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.”—Query, No reform in the church! The frequent reiteration of the Lord’s prayer, Doxologies, &c. indicates great stupidity in the people—great superstition in the clergy—or great reluctance in God to answer their petitions. “The Litany is made “up of a great many little short prayers, heaped up together, without any “matter of order, pronounced partly by the minister, and partly by the people, “who sometimes divide one short sentence between them.” *Pierce*.—It is full of repetitions, and can be scarcely read without taking God’s name in vain by the noisy congregation. [See further, Tracts No. 2 and 3, First Series.]

THIRD.—*The HERETICAL doctrines of the PRAYER BOOK.*

I. *It inculcates the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration.*—It teaches, in the plainest terms, and in the most unequivocal language, that whenever a clergyman christens a child, it is then and there made as genuine a Christian as Paul himself. A more deadly doctrine or more fruitful heresy was never promulgated by any religious sect under heaven!

II. *It teaches thousands to perjure their immortal souls.*—No child or adult can be publicly baptized in the church unless three persons come forward, and solemnly and unconditionally promise and vow, in the presence of the Almighty, to do what he has never required, what they can never accomplish, what they must be blind not to regard as impossible, and what not one in a thousand ever designs to attempt. If there be any evil worse than this among the most heterodox body of dissenters, we have not yet found it out, and believe that it no where exists among them. It is so far, indeed, an *incomparable* Prayer-book!

III. *It deludes the young with assurances of divine favour.*—If persons can say the church catechism by rote (the attainment of a few days) they are entitled to confirmation—in receiving which the lord bishop asserts that they were regenerated by water and the Holy Ghost in baptism, and now enjoy the gracious favour and goodness of God. After this they are legally entitled and urgently pressed to attend the Communion, and to enjoy all other christian privileges and immunities—even though they give no reasonable evidence of being converted by divine grace—and are living in the constant neglect of almost every holy obligation. Is not this, of itself, sufficient to stamp the Prayer-book with universal infamy?

IV. *It invests the state-priesthood with divine prerogatives.*—Nothing is more true or manifest than that the national clergy are empowered to pardon and absolve sinners from all their sins, in words as plain and express as any that were ever employed by the Son of God in forgiving transgressions in the days of his flesh; and just the same as the Romish Church uses for the like purpose. They are not, as some ignorant apologists contend, a mere declaration of what God does, but a clear assertion of what is done by the priest himself. What is there in Popery worse than this?

V. *It treats every practical conformist as a genuine Christian.*—All persons baptized and confirmed, according to the regulations of the Prayer-book, are regarded as converted and holy—and are married, addressed, and buried in precisely the same language; whether they be really pious or manifestly profane. They kneel together at the altar, are supplied with the like consolation, and cheered with exactly the same hopes and prospects.

VI. *It pronounces all those eternally safe whose remains the clergy inter.*—Now, it is a matter of fact and of exultation, among conformists, that nearly all the population are buried by the national priesthood—and, of course, nearly all the wicked, ignorant, and infidel inhabitants of the country! and the natural impression on the minds of most people is, that if the Prayer-book be true, *every wicked churchman* goes to heaven at last!

(1) Enough has now been said to justify the assertion of MR. HEAD and the title of this tract—that the Prayer-book is exceedingly superstitious and heretical—and that nothing containing a tittle of its popish rites and erroneous doctrines was ever composed by any evangelical protestant Dissenter.

(2) The use of the Prayer-book, however abridged, by voluntary communions of NONCONFORMISTS, is of very questionable policy, and not to be justified by any appeal to the word of God. The use of a part sanctions the whole, and the errors of the volume are imbibed with the adoption of the extracts. Let it, therefore, be at once expelled from every professedly Dissenting chapel.

THE TRUE CHURCHMAN'S PECULIAR BELIEF IN THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES:

Carefully collated from the Prayer Book, Articles, Canons, Homilies, Laws, Official Declarations, and Customary Usages of the Church of England.

By the Rev. W. THORN, Winchester.

A "TRUE CHURCHMAN" is one who cordially believes, sanctions, and supports ALL the doctrines, precepts, and ceremonies, taught in the Baptismal, Confirmation, Marriage, Ordination, Visitation, and other services of the Prayer-book, with all the Articles, Canons, Homilies, and sanctioned notions and doings of the establishment. Any departure from such a belief, approval, and profession is, SO FAR, a condemned defection from the State-Church.

In drawing up the "PECULIAR BELIEF" of the true Churchman, it would be improper to specify those articles of faith, order, and discipline which he holds in common with other professors of the gospel. Our object being to show wherein the law-religion differs from that of the New Testament and of voluntary evangelical nonconformity; we shall strictly adhere to the title of our essay, and exhibit only the distinguishing points and properties of the national establishment.

As the materials composing the following Articles are derived, and chiefly quoted, from the widely circulated and universally accredited laws, customs, and rituals of the state-worship, it will be unnecessary, (even were it practicable in so BRIEF a treatise) to adduce specific vouchers for the truth of our numerous declarations. The reader, however, may rest assured that the greatest caution will be observed to avoid imputing any sentiments to the genuine conformist which professional consistency does not oblige him to entertain and avow as his own.

I. "I believe that it is agreeable to the will of God for the reigning king or queen to be the supreme head of the church of Christ, in these realms—the source of all ecclesiastical influence, dignity, and power, and THE OBJECT OF ULTIMATE APPEAL, in all cases affecting christian faith and worship. This religious headship having been possessed by all the Roman emperors, both pagan and christian, and being now enjoyed by Mahometan sultans in the east, it would not appear respectful or loyal to our most religious monarchs to confer on them fewer prerogatives."

II. "I believe it to be consistent with divine revelation that no ministers, or congregations of faithful men, however INTELLIGENT OR DEVOUT, should have any power or right to alter, enlarge, or diminish the doctrines, prayers, or ceremonies of religion; but that the whole should be under the ENTIRE management of the prince and his parliament, equally with the regulation of the army, navy, and police. And that clergymen and lay episcopalians, AS SUCH, cannot pray for, advocate, or support Bible, Tract, Missionary, and similar societies; because the hierarchy recognises no such institutions."

III. "I believe it to be both *reasonable* and *scriptural* for government officers, lord-bishops, chapters, noblemen, gentlemen, ladies, and lay corporations, to nominate ministers to nearly all our parishes, benefices, and preferments, without consulting the feelings or views of the people who have TO HEAR AND SUPPORT THEM—just as officers are appointed over our soldiers, sailors, and constabulary forces."

IV. "I believe it to be *absolutely essential* to the constitution of an apostolic church (though Christ and his apostles, as in many other cases,

forgot to mention it,) that there should be *arch-bishops*, *lord-bishops*, (with seats in the House of Peers,) *chancellors*, *deans*, *archdeacons*, *prebendaries*, *canons*, *rectors*, *vicars*, *priests*, *curates*, &c. (some of them prelatically ordained two or three times over,) possessing a graduated and absolute domination over each other's persons and ministerial operations."

V. "I believe that, though our sovereign (like the Roman pontiff) wears a triple crown of ecclesiastical authority,—being the head of *EPISCOPALIANS* in England, Ireland, and Wales; of *POPERY* in Canada; and of *PRESBYTERIANISM* in Scotland—the greatest man in the Caledonian kirk should not be allowed to preach in our church; neither should any episcopal bishop of America, nor any other clergyman *in the world*, not immediately ordained by an English, Irish, or *CATHOLIC* prelate."

VI. "I believe it to be very proper (because very customary in our immaculate hierarchy) for *any* gentleman or lady, whether Christian, Jew, infidel, or heretic, to purchase the next presentation to parochial livings, (involving, of course, the *cure of IMMORTAL SOULS*,) and TO APPOINT a son, nephew, or dependent, to their respective pulpits; and that this practice accords with the will of God, and the spiritual welfare of the people."

VII. "I believe that every candidate for holy orders in our apostolical church (whatever be his personal qualifications) is very *SENSIBLY MOVED* by the Holy Ghost to take upon himself the ministry of the gospel; and that when the venerable prelate (who, of course, is always well filled with the Spirit,) places his hand on the young gentleman's head, he gives him a *FURTHER* portion of the Holy Ghost, to qualify him for his pastoral duties."

VIII. "I believe that no injury can arise to the souls of churchmen through the indiscretion and sins of the *duly-ordained* clergy; and that their occasionally attending balls, card-parties, races, theatres, or joining a fox hunt, or taking too much wine, or being a little too much with women, or failing to pay their debts, or using a few indecorous or profane expressions, cannot, in the least degree, vitiate *their professional operations*; and also that it is very schismatical and wicked to forsake the *parish church*, and our incomparable and immutable liturgy, on account of the minister's errors, imbecility, or misconduct."

IX. "I believe also that there does not arise to our holy church a shadow of disparagement on account of its having derived its services from a collation of *mass books*; its wealth from *catholic liberality*; and its *ministerial virtues* through the hands of popish prelates; and though our religion bears a *striking* resemblance to that of its parent, I believe it right to abuse, as corrupt and abominable, the system whence our peculiar principles and practice sprung; and to anathematize those who *now* dissent from us, as *we formerly* dissented from the church of Rome."

X. "I believe it *to have been* perfectly lawful and right for Henry VIII. and his parliament to seize all the ecclesiastical property in the nation, and to transfer it from the catholics (for whose peculiar religion it was originally given) to his minions, nobles, and mistresses, and to the protestant deno-

mination, IN TRUST, for specific purposes. But now I believe it would be diabolical sacrilege, and a destroying of vested rights, for the state to take a particle of the same national endowments, and to appropriate it to ANY PURPOSE beside that of maintaining and enriching the reformed priesthood."

XI. "I believe that, though the property of the church might have been formerly given by the catholics for the support of THE POOR and the reparation of PLACES OF WORSHIP, as well as for the maintenance of the bishops, and clergy, it is now perfectly equitable for the priests to receive the WHOLE, however augmented in value; and for the government to compel the overburdened parishes to take care of the poor, and to repair the churches, by means of local and coercive taxation."

XII. "I believe that the mode adopted by our holy and sagacious ancestors in the ninth century, of supporting the church by a *tenth* of their incomes or of the produce of the soil, to have been truly excellent; and that now every parochial clergyman should have, without the smallest drawback, (and beside his house, glebe, fees, dues, and endowments,) a tithe of all the corn, hay, grass, fruit, wood, turnips, potatoes, onions, cabbages, horses, cows, pigs, poultry, milk, eggs, fish, coals, ore, wages, &c. raised, bred, caught, dug, and earned in this country; and that, if any refuse to pay, it is proper to employ lawyers, police, soldiers, horses, artillery, &c. to imprison, and, if necessary, to stab, cut, and shoot them, till they do."

XIII. "I believe that the amount of income for the clergy, or, at least, for a part of them, should be very handsome, as an INDUCEMENT for men of rank and talent to enter into holy orders. I believe that a lord-bishop may fairly receive from five to twenty thousand a year; a dean, from one to five thousand; and a prebendary, from two to five hundred pounds for *every sermon* he preaches; and that for a clerical family to obtain from the soil (without any deduction for capital employed, rent, labour, and taxes, independent of house, glebe, dues, and offerings,) as much, on an average, as twenty lay families, or from five to ten pounds *per head* per year, for all his parochial charge, is perfectly equitable."

XIV. "I believe it also very laudable (because very common) for one clergyman to hold *several* livings and preferments in the church, though he may perform the duty of neither; provided he employ curates to do it for him. This plan has the advantage of rewarding personal or relative merit; of attaching the parsons to their patrons and the government; of preserving clerical respectability and influence; and of placing over a village population priests whose own humble circumstances will enable them to SYMPATHIZE with the poorest in their congregations."

XV. "I believe it to be in accordance with the purity of the church and the holy discipline of primitive ages, to reckon as LEGAL AND CANONICAL MEMBERS of the church all the inhabitants of the country, whether they be Jews, Turks, Catholics, Quakers, Baptists Socinians, Methodists, Independents, or any thing else; and to allow them, as British subjects—in common with drunkards, swearers, debauchees, sabbath breakers, and so on—to par-

ticipate in all the mysteries, privileges, *sacraments*, and pecuniary transactions of the church, *equally* with pious and practical conformists."

XVI. "I believe it to be *just* to compel, at the point of the bayonet, if necessary, ALL THE INHABITANTS of the empire, (whatever be their religious opinions, or however burdened by supporting their own peculiar modes of worship,) to pay directly or indirectly, in *church-rates* or *land-tax* towards maintaining the *et ceteras* of the church of England; to remunerate the clerks, beadles, and sextons; to provide bells, organs, fiddles, flutes, and singers; Bibles, prayer-books, cushions, candles, stoves, coals, mats, bricks, mortar, paint, and labour; clean surplices, table-cloths, flagons, cups, BREAD AND WINE for the sacrament; and a good DINNER occasionally for the spiritual pastor, churchwardens, and their particular friends."

XVII. "I believe that every person who practically dissents from the church of England commits the dreadful sin of SCHISM, and rends in pieces the seamless garment of Christ; that he should be regarded as an ignoramus, FULL OF CONCEIT, a fanatic, heretic, jacobin, radical, infidel, and traitor; should be condemned, degraded, and punished; should be deprived of all parochial charities; should lose HIS REPUTATION AND TRADE; and should be otherwise treated as a heathen man and a publican, until he revoke HIS WICKED ERRORS, and return to the bosom of the only true church; though I believe that drunken, debauched, idle, dishonest, and infidel conformists, especially if rich, should be treated with respect and kindness."

XVIII. "I believe that no person, however learned or religious, should be allowed to take any degree at Oxford or Cambridge, or any where else in England and Wales, in LAW, PHYSIC, or divinity; nor enter into holy orders, until he shall have declared by subscription or oath, that he believes the queen to be the rightful head of the church; the XXXIX Articles to be agreeable to the word of God; and the Book of Common Prayer and the ordering of bishops, priests, and deacons, to contain nothing contrary to Scripture; nor until he shall have promised to use NO OTHER FORMS OF PRAYER in public worship. I believe, however, that it is not necessary to *understand* these doctrines, articles, &c. BEFORE swearing to observe them; and that to compel more than 20,000 churchwardens annually to promise what they cannot fulfil, is what all true churchmen may safely overlook."

XIX. "I believe that the Church of England, supported by coercive taxation, founded on acts of the civil legislature, and constituted with arch-bishops and lord-bishops, &c. (though but a speck in Christendom) is the purest, if not the *only* true church in the world; that all other reformed communions, at home or abroad, are left to the uncovenanted mercies of God; that all dissenting ministers are only in *pretended* holy orders, and their ministry, at least in Great Britain and Ireland, devoid of any saving influence; that all their people are deluded and in imminent danger of perishing for ever, for deserting the sacred fold of the establishment; and that those *voluntary* churches, WITHIN the pale of the hierarchy, are, in the main, no better then conventicles, using the Book of Common Prayer."

THE TRUE CHURCHMAN'S PECULIAR BELIEF IN THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES:

Carefully collated from the Prayer Book, Articles, Canons, Homilies, Laws, Official Declarations,
and Customary Usages of the Church of England.

By the REV. W. THORN, Winchester.

XX. "I believe that no dissenting minister *ought to be* allowed to baptize children, as he cannot, like a REAL clergyman, give a regenerating efficacy to the ceremony; nor to educate youth, as his doctrines must tend to alienate their hearts from the true church, thereby endangering their everlasting welfare; nor to be the chaplain of a ship, regiment, gaol, bridewell, workhouse, hospital, or female penitentiary; and I believe that episcopalians, who would concede these and similar privileges to clamorous seceders, are traitors and INFIDELS, or no better than wolves in sheep's clothing."

XXI. "I believe that a strict and perpetual UNIFORMITY in the prayers and ceremonies of the hierarchy, is absolutely requisite; and that all our preachers should subscribe the same articles of faith and worship, should always read the same liturgical services, perform the same ceremonies, and wear the like costumes. I believe, also, that while this uniformity is maintained, UNANIMITY on points of faith and moral conduct is not of much importance. Nor, in my judgment, does it affect the superior excellence of our religion, that, on some grave points of theology, there are great differences between most of our spiritual guides."

XXII. "I believe that extemporary prayer in public worship leads to errors and fanaticism; and that our printed form is the only proper method to be usefully adopted by an orthodox clergyman. I believe that PRAYER-MEETINGS, in which lay persons are allowed to offer up their crude and ungrammatical supplications, kindle false fires, and engender much self-conceit, and should be suppressed. I believe also that two forms of prayer, with a few occasional variations, are sufficient for a man's WHOLE life; and that the repetition of the Lord's Prayer, doxologies, and the like, 4 or 5 times during a single service, is very EDIFYING AND IMPRESSIVE."

XXIII. "I believe that if there be any thing in the constitution, doctrines, services, ceremonies, or customary usages, of the church of England, not immediately taken from Scripture, (which all good churchmen should be SLOW to admit) it being enjoined by the LAWFUL head of the hierarchy, renders it EQUALLY binding on the judgments, lives, and consciences of the English nation, with the MOST IMPORTANT dictates of inspiration. Hence, I believe that when our noble and pious ancestors silenced, impoverished, imprisoned, banished, or burnt thousands of lay and clerical heretics, for objecting to the surplice, sign of the cross, kneeling at the sacrament, &c. as not founded on Scripture, they were fully justified in their wholesale castigations."

XXIV. "I believe it to be perfectly agreeable to the mind of Christ, that the APOCRYPHAL books of the Jews (though rejected as false by many fanatical supporters of the Bible Society) should be publicly read in the Church of England, in the PLACE of the inspired volume. I also believe it very right that the Psalter should be read in the venerable, though antiquated, translation of Coverdale, the puritan, rather than in the common version of James the First; that a sumptuous decking and ADORNING of churches and temples, is a shocking abuse; and that setting up images and PICTURES in them, leads to idolatry, and is abominable in the sight of God."

XXV. "I believe that when a *genuine* clergyman of our holy mother church baptizes children or adults (which must be done in their own parish) he should always require three sponsors (parents, of course, excepted,) to promise and vow before the Lord, that the baptized shall renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh; shall believe all the articles of the Christian faith; and always keep God's holy will and commandments. I believe that AS SOON AS the candidate has been sprinkled and crossed with water, he is REGENERATED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, MADE a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven."

XXVI. "I believe that when children are about twelve or fourteen years of age, provided they can repeat the Lord's prayer and the Church Catechism, (the latter to be taught only by persons licensed for the purpose) IN THEIR MOTHER TONGUE, their spiritual parents should bring them to the lord-bishop for confirmation; where they should release their sponsors from all official obligations, by taking their sins for the future on themselves. The prelate should then declare that they were all *regenerated* by water and the Holy Ghost in baptism; and, laying his right reverend hand on their youthful heads, should certify them (by that sign) that they are all *God's servants*, and possess his gracious favour and goodness."

XXVII. "I believe that every *lay person*, when confirmed, *is bound* to receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, in his own parish church, at least three times a year, and *every* collegiate *four* times; that the bishop, dean, prebendary, or canon, assisted by the gospeller or epistler, in a *decent cope*, should administer it in cathedrals upon all principal feast days. I believe that, in the Homilies, the elements are properly designated 'the communion of the body and blood of the Lord in a *marvellous incorporation*'—and that the body and blood of Christ are verily and *indeed* taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper."

XXVIII. "I believe that when a minister of our church inters an individual, in properly *consecrated* soil, whatever may have been his creed or conduct up to the last moment of his existence (if not a felo-de-se, unbaptized infant, or excommunicated person), it is proper for him to bless God for having delivered his brother out of the miseries of this sinful world, by taking his *soul to himself*; and to commit his body to the ground, in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life *through* our Lord Jesus Christ; and that though it is not contrary to any doctrine of the church to pray for the souls of departed persons, as do the Roman Catholics, it would be, *with us*, quite superfluous—*because*,"

XXIX. "I believe that every national clergyman, *if in full priest's orders*, has power from above, not merely to declare that God will pardon the believing penitent, (which even a clerical deacon or a layman might equally aver,) but absolutely to blot out all his transgressions, in the following words:—'By his authority, committed to me, *I absolve thee* from ALL thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.' This I believe perfectly modest in our clergymen; though it would be arrogant, destructive, and abominable in a *Catholic priest*, or a nonconforming preacher."

XXX. "I believe that whenever the name 'Jesus' is mentioned in divine service, all the congregation should bow their heads or courtesy; and that similar respect should not be paid to any other appellation of the Deity. I believe they should all turn towards the *east* (like the Persians) when repeating the Apostle's creed; that they should stand to read the Gospels, and sit while reading the Epistles; that altars, being most holy, should be placed at the *east* end of the building; that all corpses should be interred with their heads due *west*; that no church or cemetery should be used before it has been consecrated by a bishop; that *no* preacher should be called reverend, or wear a gown, except an episcopalian clergyman; and that piping, singing, chanting, and playing upon the *organs*, sorely displeases God, and filthily defiles his holy house."

XXXI. "I believe it to be quite in keeping with the genius, if not with the letter of revelation, to observe, with the sanctity of a sabbath, a goodly number of saints' days—to keep 31 days of feasting and 95 days of fasting—in all, 126 days, besides 52 sundays, in the year. That it was proper to canonize Charles I. as a *martyr*; to bless God for the *abundant* grace bestowed upon him; and that it is right now to designate every sovereign of Great Britain, whatever be his moral or political character, 'our *most religious* and gracious' king, or queen."

XXXII. "I believe that in the services and ceremonies of the church no invidious *distinctions* should be tolerated; that when pious or profane adults are baptized or confirmed, the *same* language should be applied to both; that when holy or wicked persons are married, the priest should make no difference between them; that the frail girl of the town, and the virtuous matron, when churched, should both be designated alike, the *servants* of God, and receive the same benedictions; that *all sorts* of persons should be equally admitted to the Lord's table, and punished for not attending it; and be, at last, interred with precisely similar expressions of gratulation, thankfulness, and hope."

XXXIII. "I believe that whosoever shall impugn the queen's supremacy in religious matters in this country, or affirm that the Church of England is not a true and *spiritual* church; or that the worship of the Church of England containeth *any thing* contrary to the Scriptures; or that the Thirty-nine Articles are in *any* part erroneous; or that the rites and ceremonies are at all superstitious; or that the government of the Church of England, by *archbishops*, &c. is repugnant to the word of God; or disbelieves the explication of the blessed Trinity, as contained in the Athanasian creed, should be excommunicated *ipso facto*."

XXXIV. "I believe that every one who impugns any ordinance of the Church of England, as contrary to the word of God; or that separates himself from this church, and unites himself with another fraternity, calling it *a true church*; or that, being a minister, preaches or administers the Lord's Supper in *private houses*; or that *casts out any devil or devils*, except by authority of his ordinary; or that holds any *conventicle*; would expose himself to the imputation of imposture, and should be excommunicated *ipso facto*."

XXXV. "I believe that no clergyman should be permitted to officiate in the Church of England without proper canonical attire; that bishops should wear wigs, lawn-sleeves, and black silk aprons; that all persons holding any ecclesiastical living should usually wear gowns with *standing collars*, and *sleeves strait* at the hands, or *wide sleeves* with *hoods* and *tippets* of silk or sarsenet, and *square caps*; that in their journeys they should usually wear *cloaks with sleeves without guards, welts, long buttons, or cuts*; and that they should never wear any *coif* or *wrought night cap*; nor any *light-coloured stockings* in public."

XXXVI. "I believe that every person excommunicated for violating the afore-cited, or any other canons, should be disabled from doing any act that is required to be done by a true and legal man; that he should not *serve on juries*; nor be *a witness* in any court; *nor bring an action*, either real or personal, to recover lands or money due to him; and that if, within forty days after sentence denounced upon him, he did not submit to the judgment of the court, he should be taken up and *imprisoned* in the county gaol, without bail or mainprize, until he be reconciled to the church, and until such reconciliation be certified by the bishop."

XXXVII. "I believe that all and every part of our excellent articles, prayer-book, canons, and homilies, ARE ALIKE AND EQUALLY binding; (being so construed by the sage doctors of our spiritual courts;) that customary usages are but the common law of the hierarchy; and that all official declarations should be received as indubitable expositions of its pious intentions. I believe that the whole was settled by men ALMOST inspired for the purpose; that NONE of it can be justly considered obsolete while in our sacred standards, and subscribed by EVERY clergyman; that the true church cannot have been in any error for 300 years; and that those ignorant heretics, who object to many of the preceding articles, AS ARISING FROM ABUSE OR WANT OF DISCIPLINE, should be informed that most of them are among the FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES of our apostolical establishment."

XXXVIII. "I believe that though our parsons have been zealously at work three hundred years, the public at large possess so little judgment, sense, or concern, about the affairs of religion, COMPARED WITH the queen and parliament, that were not every portion of its forms and ceremonies brought level to the LOWEST CAPACITY, and the priesthood supported by coercive taxation, there would soon be no Christianity in the land. I believe, therefore, that it is praise-worthy in our pious and religious queen and her EVANGELICAL parliament, to provide, at the public expense, church-room and parsons for the ENTIRE POPULATION, as though a single dissenter did not exist in the country; and, further, I believe that, though PRACTICAL conformists may be no more than a THIRD of the entire community, all should be equally forced to sustain the religion of this minority."

XXXIX. "I believe that the separation of church and state (or the removal of national endowments and patronage, and placing episcopacy on its own merits) would be attended with MANY CALAMITOUS RESULTS. The queen would lose her spiritual supremacy; the parliament, many interesting subjects of discussion; government, thousands of spiritual police or parochial placemen, bribed and ready to defend its conservative operations; patrons, the power of nomination; and all the younger and less-gifted sons of great families, the chance of benefices and ecclesiastical dignities. The security of all lay property might be endangered; ministers would be dependent on their people for support; our fine buildings, 'which adorn the landscapes,' might fall into decay; and even dissenters themselves would lose the BRIGHT EXAMPLE, the lovely RALLYING POINT, and the HOLY STIMULUS of our pure and venerable hierarchy!!"

In conclusion, every consistent churchman, actually or tacitly supports, or sanctions, every one of the preceding sentiments; and he that disbelieves, or fails to comply with the whole, is at least a partial dissenter. And whoever objects to any considerable portion of these articles, and yet remains in the establishment, for the sake of gain, honour, or any other secular consideration, must be classed with the greatest hypocrites of the age.

ALL CHURCH PEOPLE ESSENTIALLY "PAPISTS."

A LETTER TO MR. G. SAULEZ, of ANSTEY, near ALTON, HANTS.

By the Rev. W. THORN, Winchester.

"In doctrine, (as Mr. Newman, Mr. Oakley, Mr. Ward, the British Critic, and others have "abundantly shown,) there is absolutely no difference between them (the Churches of "England and Rome.) Both maintain the same faith, both administer the same sacra-
"ments," &c.—See STANDARD PAPER, Dec. 14, 1841.

In a letter you honoured me with a short time ago, is the following sentence:—"Why has the late infatuated pastor of St. James's, Ryde, apostatized from "the Established Church to Romanism, but because, in the vanity of his heart, he has "set up his own judgment, in opposition to the word of God, as the standard of truth."

If this passage have any point, as applied to the Author of the Tracts on "THE ERRORS AND EVILS OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND;" it means that Congregational Dissenters—whose principles he advocates—are as infatuated as MR. SIBTHORP; that their secession to the ranks of Nonconformity is as criminal as his apostacy to Romanism; and that it also arises from "the vanity of their hearts," and through "setting up their own judgment in opposition to the word of God, as the standard of truth."

You further remark, "There are spots in the Sun; but would it not be the height "of absurdity for men, on that account, to shut their eyes against the light of that "glorious luminary?—adding, "Let him then among you who is without sin, cast a "stone at the established church." In these sentences you display unaccountable blindness respecting the Church of England, as compared with "the word of God, the "standard of religious truth;" and unpardonable prejudice against Congregational Dissent, as though it were equally unscriptural with the state-religion.

Now, to defend the denomination to which I belong is no part of my present business. In fact, as you bring no specific charges against it, there is nothing tangible to notice or answer. Nor is it my object to apologize for the recent conduct of "the "late Pastor of St. James's, Ryde." I believe, however, that he was as greatly "infatuated," and cherished as much "vanity in his heart," while in the state-church as when he "apostatized to Romanism;" and that he "set up his own judgment in "opposition to the word of God, as the standard of truth," while a clergyman of the establishment, equally as since he became a catholic priest.

By "CHURCH PEOPLE," I mean all those who avow themselves members of the endowed religion, who usually attend its services, and who otherwise identify themselves with it, as distinguished from Protestant Nonconformity. And by being "ESSENTIALLY PAPISTS," I mean holding the leading doctrines, and exhibiting the principle features, of Popery—especially such as are antichristian, and not received by Evangelical Dissenters.

I am willing to admit, that between the churches of Rome and England there are several discrepancies—and some of them to the advantage of the latter. But those distinctions embrace nothing vital or of chief importance in either persuasion. They are more nominal than actual, and consist more in show and form than in substance and reality. If the Church of Rome may, in some things, be regarded as the more HETERODOX; the Church of England, as a whole, must be viewed as by far the more INCONSISTENT, of the two. But to the point—

I. *You have a POPE in the reigning monarch of the nation, who is the supreme head of your church, and who exercises the same powers—(in creating bishops, and through them the inferior clergy, and in sanctioning, if not originating, all ecclesiastical laws and edicts)—as those held by the Pontiff in the Romish Communion.*

II. *You have CARDINALS in function and authority, though wanting their hats.*—The Privy Council and the British Parliament perform the office of religiously advising your secular Pope in all matters concerning your 'sun-like' establishment. The conclaves in the Vatican and in St. Stephens' are, in this respect, officially identical.

III. *You possess a HIERARCHY about the same as that of Rome.*—
1. A Royal Pope—2. Cardinals—3. Archbishops—4. Lord Bishops—
5. Deans—6. Rural Deans—7. Chancellors—8. Prebendaries—9. Archdeacons—10. Rectors—11. Vicars—12. Curates, &c. with graduated powers and prerogatives—exercised over larger or less parts of the country, and portions of the population.

IV. *You have SPIRITUAL COURTS, with Judges, Proctors, Registrars, Apparitors, Surrogates, &c.* symbolizing with those of Rome; and, like them, employing the civil power to punish men in soul, body, relatives, and worldly goods, for setting up their own judgment in opposition—not to the word of God—but to the established religion, and refusing to support what they justly, fairly, and conscientiously condemn.

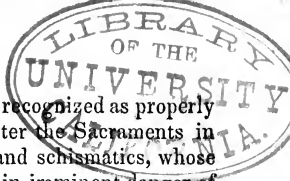
V. *You have ECCLESIASTICAL CANONS nearly the same as those of the Papal Church.*—By these your conduct is tried, and by these you are acquitted or punished. The Scriptures are not the object of chief judicial appeal in any case of assumed spiritual delinquency. These canons, moreover, are as inquisitorial, superstitious, and cruel as any in the Catholic Church; if you doubt, read the first dozen, as a sample.

VI. *You have a COERCIVELY SUPPORTED system like Popery* in her palmy days in this country, and like Popery still on the continent. You repudiate the voluntary scheme of the New Testament—all the inhabitants being heavily taxed by tithes, rates, dues, grants, &c. to support your clergy, worship, and ecclesiastical edifices.

VII. *You have CHURCH PATRONAGE like Rome.*—You virtually trade in the souls of men—selling the cure of them to the highest bidder—and giving the emoluments thereof—as goods and chattels, horses and chariots—to nephews and favourites. The scriptural election of pastors by Christian societies your church holds as alien and unconstitutional.

VIII. *You have a FIXED LITURGY like the Papists,* whose Mass Book you have turned into English, and use as your own. It is imposed on you by Parliament, without whose permission it is unalterable; and by it you must ever regulate your devotions in public worship; in which also you dare read only the state-authorized version of the Bible.

IX. *You are SECTARIAN and BIGOTED equally with the Catholics.*



—No ministers but your own and *Popish Priests* are recognized as properly ordained, entitled to preach, or qualified to administer the Sacraments in your church. All without your pale are heretics and schismatics, whose services ought to be suppressed, and whose souls are in imminent danger of endless perdition!

X. *You REJECT THE SCRIPTURES as your sole directory in religious matters*, equally with the Romanists. You rely on the traditions and councils of the first four centuries—you read the Apocrypha in the place of the Bible—and you otherwise model your system by the rules of human expediency, and make it subservient to political aggrandisement—you also alike virtually forbid all private interpretations of the word of God.

XI. *You OBSERVE TIMES like the Catholics*.—You have an incredible number of Fast-days, Feast-days, and days dedicated to reputed saints. The terms by which your Sundays are numbered and distinguished are purely Popish; as are also the names given to your places of worship—nearly all of them being dedicated to sinful human beings.

XII. *Your CONSECRATION of CHURCHES is quite papistical*.—They are not simply set apart as places of divine worship; but they are rendered so holy that no dissenter may be allowed to officiate in them—that stealing from them only is sacrilege—that brawling in them only is a criminal offence—nor is it deemed respectful to enter them at any time, without baring your head to the sacred walls and the sanctified pews and pillars thereof.

XIII. *You have PRELITICAL ORDINATION like the Papists*.—No man, not ordained by a bishop of your own church or that of Rome, can officiate at your altars. And when ordained, he receives a character, an unction, a power, or something, which compensates for all personal deficiencies, and which he can never get rid of through want of a cure, conformity, gifts, grace, morality, or any other ministerial virtues.

XIV. *You have as MONOPOLIZING A CHURCH as ever Rome was*.—Your parsons must finger all the money, wear all the honours, and fill all ecclesiastical posts, down to that of a chaplaincy in a workhouse or penitentiary. The priests of Rome were never more greedy, grinding, or ambitious, than your own.

XV. *You have as DIVIDED A CHURCH as ever Popery exhibited*.—You have clergy and people of all possible creeds—and all at war with each other on *the most vital* points of religion—bishops against bishops—priests against priests—Orthodox against Evangelical—[*Nicholson and Veitch* versus *Wordsworth*, of Winton, to wit!!]—Puseyites against Protestants—High-church against the Low.—Compared with all this, every Dissenting sect among us is enjoying the most profound tranquility.

XVI. *Your RELIGIOUS WORSHIP—especially where it is conducted according to the Canons and Rubric of your church, as in cathedrals and among the Puseyites—IS A FAIR COUNTERPART OF ROMANISM*.—You, like them, have your systematic standing, sitting, bowing,

kneeling, turning, dresses, reading and preaching in different places, responses, &c.—all beautifully Popish!!

XVII. *You deal with THE YOUNG just like the Catholics.*—You make real Christians of them all at the font—where you regenerate them by the Holy Ghost, and gravely mark them with the sign of the cross. You teach them the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration from the Catechism, and in the service of Confirmation. You also bless them with three sponsors a piece, and assure them of the gracious favour of God.

XVIII. *In the LORD'S SUPPER, "the body and blood of Christ,"* (which the Homilies designate "A MARVELLOUS INCORPORATION,") "are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful!" on their knees! before an altar! and only at the hands of a fully ordained priest!! To this spiritual feast all the confirmed are entitled and invited. Is not this truly Papistical?

XIX *You ABSOLVE the SICK—after CONFESSING to the Priest—* just like the Church of Rome—on the same conditions—in more expressive words—and to a much greater extent. You give them—and even criminals about to be executed—the holy Sacrament—which is but extreme unction under another name—and productive of similar soul-deceiving results on your ignorant patients.

XX. Your BURIAL SERVICE *deludes the living* by sending all the dead to heaven. You inter them only in prelatically consecrated soil—and you bless God for taking the souls of your dear brothers and sisters (who may have lived and died infidels and profligates)—to himself in glory—and you commit their remains to the earth in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life *through our Lord Jesus Christ*. Is not this Popery with a vengeance!!—[See Tract, No. 2—First Series.]

But I have no room for further specifications; and I think it will now be manifest, even to you, Sir—prejudiced and unenlightened as you evidently are respecting the evils of your own system—that your church is essentially Popish—maintaining the principal and most pernicious rites of Romanism (the master policy of satanic ingenuity)—and that therefore you and all other Church People must be essentially Papists; and cannot have far to go to join "the late infatuated Pastor of St. James's, Ryde," in his present religious communion!

I am aware that this tract will not be very cordially received by you and your like-minded brethren in the state-church. It will probably be ascribed to ignorance, envy, and bigotry, to a bad spirit, and to a design to injure the usefulness of good men in the Establishment. But the only question, of the slightest importance in the matter is, have I stated the truth? If I have not, promptly and plainly point out my mistakes. If I have—receive it—follow it—join the ranks of Evangelical Dissent—and no longer set up your "own judgment," nor follow that of others, "in opposition to the word of God, as the standard of truth"—the professed and exclusive religious directory of all Congregational Nonconformists.

“PUSEYITES”

THE MOST CONSISTENT CHURCHMEN.

By the REV. W. THORN, Winchester.

WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF A CLERGYMAN OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

The Puseyites “are the first persons in the Church of England who, for more than a century past, have conscientiously and rigidly endeavoured to live up to what they nominally profess—to obey the regulations of that church of which they call themselves “members.”—See MORN. CHRON. Jan. 1, 1842.

A GREAT outcry has of late been raised by many church people against certain expositions of the Prayer Book, &c. which have appeared in the “TRACTS FOR THE TIMES;” and their reverend authors have been severely condemned as the abettors of exceedingly strange and erroneous doctrines.

But it is worthy of remark, that those complaining episcopalians have cautiously and prudently avoided entering the field of formal and legitimate controversy with their Puseyite brethren, in order to prove that their interpretations of the doctrines, sacraments, and ceremonies of the church are irrelative and false.

Nor would it be difficult to show that Puseyite views of the Church of England have, from the first, been held and advocated by numerous learned and dignified prelates and clergymen of the state-religion, whose writings are industriously circulated, and often referred to with apparent satisfaction and triumph, by multitudes of genuine conformists.

It should be kept in mind that the Puseyite party is ENTIRELY EPISCOPALIAN, and embraces many of the most learned, devout, attached, and respectable ministers and members of the national establishment. Hence, their popish sentiments and practices cannot be ascribed to ignorance, indifference, or denominational defection, by their conforming accusers. Nor can they be supposed to originate in the hope of immediate gain or of secular distinctions—the wind and tide being yet against them!

No intelligent looker-on can, for a moment, question that the opposition and abuse the Puseyites meet with arise either, (1) from the IGNORANCE of their conforming opponents as to the real character and doctrines of their own idolized system, or (2) from a sad PERPLEXITY felt on finding the true popish features of the church fairly unmasked before the eyes of its previously hoodwinked admirers—not by avowed adversaries, but by its own doctors and friends.

That the OXFORD TRACT writers may have carried out certain doctrines and regulations of the church, in the direction of Rome, to the extreme point, and shown occasional inconsistencies, is a position I am not prepared to deny. But it has yet to be proved that they have materially transgressed the limits of fair deduction, in any cases involving the distinguishing peculiarities of their own party; or that they are half as inconsistent as their noisy episcopalian opponents.

The existing Puseyite contention clearly proves that (beside numerous minor divisions) there are two large antagonistic parties in the Church of England; one of them LEANING TOWARDS PROTESTANTISM, or the principles of Evangelical Dissent; and the other TOWARDS POPERY, or the Church of Rome. Yet both regard themselves as true conformists to its doctrines and ceremonies, and cry up the parent sect as a paragon of spiritual unity and excellence.

The object of the present tract is to show that those who entertain and propagate PUSEYITE views of the establishment, are much more consistent ministers of it, than others who hold and advocate more protestant, scriptural, and rational sentiments on religious subjects.

In so concise a publication as this it is impossible to exceed the mere statement of a few distinguishing principles, respecting which the parties in question may be at issue. The utmost care will be taken not to misrepresent the real opinions of the Church—the Puseyites or their opponents. The reader, who may entertain any doubt respecting the truth of my assertions and statements, is referred (1) To the “Tracts for the Times” —and No. 90 in particular—(2) To the well known sentiments of most enlightened and liberal churchmen—and (3) To the Standard Authorities of the State Religion. And, fairly consulting these, I think he will readily concede that I have fallen into no very essential mistakes.

I. *Puseyites perfectly agree with the Church on the subject of BAPTISMAL REGENERATION*; both equally believing and teaching that in this sacrament, administered by a duly ordained priest, every child is forgiven, justified, redeemed, sanctified, and saved; or “made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.”—Those professed conformists who deny the truth of this blasphemous dogma are unquestionably the most heterodox members of the national church!

II. *Puseyites perfectly agree with the Church on CONFESSION to the Parson and PRIESTLY ABSOLUTION*; both alike maintaining that every clergyman, in full priest’s orders, has the power of the keys, and is authorised, not simply to declare that God pardons all who truly repent and believe his holy gospel, but (if words have any true meaning) to absolve them himself—equally with the catholic priest, and even in stronger terms than the latter ever ventures to employ on the occasion.—Those church people who doubt or deny this assumption are strangely inconsistent and surprisingly ignorant conformists!

III. *Puseyites perfectly agree with the Church respecting the EUCHARIST*; both regard it as a profoundly mysterious institution—exhibiting a “marvellous incorporation of the body and blood of Christ;” and believe that when consecrated by a chief or subordinate successor of the apostles, the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ, and are *verily and indeed* taken and received by the faithful in the Lord’s Supper.—The conformist that denies this is grossly heterodox in his notions!

IV. *Puseyites agree with the Church on APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION*, in substance if not in precise terms; both hold that no person, however pious and gifted, can efficaciously administer the word or sacraments, who has not been duly ordained by an *Anglican* or *Popish* bishop—whose ordination may be traced up to the Apostles, and who is enabled to confer the gift of the Holy Ghost on the candidates for the ministry; and by which the latter become almost, if not quite, infallible teachers of

the people—Churchmen disbelieving this absurd and unsupported doctrine are ecclesiastical heretics!

V. *Puseyites agree with the Church on the absolute necessity and astonishing benefits of CONFIRMATION*; both consider it essentially pre-requisite to membership and communion, and believe my lord bishop warranted to tell all the young people that they were regenerated by the Holy Ghost in baptism, and now possess the gracious favour and goodness of God.—Those who view this as antichristian, delusive, and dangerous, are heterodox conformists!

VI. *Puseyites agree with the Church ON TRADITION*, and the authority of the Fathers and councils, at least, of the first four centuries; in reading the Apocryphal books in the place of God's word in public worship; and in appealing to human power and expediency in all sacred affairs.—Hence, church people, who talk of, and contend for, the Bible and the Bible only, are little better than nonconforming schismatics!

VII. *Puseyites agree with the Church on the subject of FASTING, FEASTING, saints' days, and observing times legally consecrated by the will of the flesh to the worship of God.* Which of the two is more rigid and precise it is difficult to determine.—Conformists who make light of these times and seasons and seldom observe them are, at best, poor luke-warm, half-and-half churchmen, infected with the heresy of dissent!

VIII. *Puseyites agree with the Church respecting the ORDERS, DEGREES, titles, attire, subordination, and mode of support, (by general taxation) of the PRIESTHOOD*; and are perfectly orthodox in their clerical pride, superstition, priestcraft, assumptions, bigotry, intolerance, and hatred of all protestant Dissenters: (compare "*cursing*" *Palmer's* pamphlet with the 1st 12 canons.)—While those who oppose and condemn them, on account of all or any of these ungodly attributes and actions, may be better christians, but unquestionably are more inconsistent churchmen!

IX. *Puseyites agree with the Church respecting the CONSECRATION* of buildings for religious services, and burying-places for the dead; the forms, rites, regulations, ceremonies, and popish nonsense of divine worship; also the prayers to be read, and the psalms to be sung, in addressing the Almighty.—Persons who treat them as ignorant and superstitious for this, have no right to *recognize themselves* as consistent or duly approved members of the national hierarchy!

X. *Puseyites agree with the Church in teaching the YOUNG* the soul-deceiving doctrines of the CHURCH CATECHISM; in causing Godfathers and Godmothers to perjure their souls at the baptismal font; in giving the sacrament to the sick and dying, as a kind of passport to heaven; and in deluding the living by sending every sinner, whose remains they canonically inter in consecrated soil, to everlasting life, *through our Lord Jesus Christ*.—For any members of the state-church to oppose or reprove them on account of such a shocking procedure, is to condemn themselves for remaining in a church which imperatively commands them to believe and do it, and *to all which they gravely pronounce their Amen!*

To enter on further details would be totally superfluous. If our preceding statements are correct, (and we have no doubts on that point,) Puseyites and multitudes beside, who hold their sentiments without assuming or receiving the name, are manifestly more consistent ministers and members of the endowed hierarchy, than those church parsons who regard them as superstitious and antichristian. That Puseyites are extravagant and ultra in some of their notions, occasionally run wild on certain mysterious points, and prefer a Romish to an English Pope, I am not careful to deny. The question is not, whether any one class of churchmen is absolutely consistent—but whether the Puseyites are not *more* consistent than those episcopalians who malign them, or than any other party found in the bosom of the endowed system? I believe that they are—and if any person can find out a more consistent class, he will effect an object which I deem beyond his ability.

It is often adduced, by ignorant church people, as a serious charge against the Puseyites, that they are accustomed to make obeisance towards the altar, and set candles upon it, to erect crosses in or on their religious buildings, to officiate in curiously cut and coloured dresses, and so on; as if these were perfect novelties and unauthorized innovations in the establishment. Whereas they have been common in numerous churches, at least ever since the days of *Laud*, and are accordant with the spirit and letter of the state system. If you doubt, witness the worship of our cathedrals, and read the regulations of the ecclesiastical canons.

In the tract immediately preceding this, entitled—"All Church People Essentially Papists"—it is shown that the state-religion is Popish in almost every distinguishing principle it maintains and every rite it observes. And as Puseyism is but another name for Popery, it fairly follows, that the Puseyites are its most honest and consistent members.

It follows also, that the cry raised against the Puseyite clergy, accusing them of denominational heterodoxy, schism, and defection from the national religion; of filling posts which they ought in honour to vacate; and of receiving professional incomes which they ought not to finger; is void of any just or valid ecclesiastical foundation, and might with more propriety be adduced against their accusers, how much so ever the latter may plume themselves on their protestantism, evangelical views, and pastoral assiduities. In fact, both classes *are shamefully pilfering the public* for their own personal and RELATIVE aggrandizement.

The design of the present paper is not to vindicate the Puseyites; but to expose "The Errors and Evils of the Church," in which they are the most consistent members. Tried by the establishment, Puseyism is comparatively guiltless; tried by the word of God, it is a compound of superstition, heterodoxy, intolerance, and infidelity. Those conformists who agree most with the Church of England are most akin to Puseyism, while those who most accord with the word of God are unquestionably the most inconsistent and schismatical members of the State Religion. "I speak as
"unto wise men; judge ye what I say."

THE SIN OF SANCTIONING THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

By the Rev. W. THORN, Winchester.

THAT a church, deriving its constitution, orders, opinions, influence, and rites from Popery, through the controlling medium of ignorant and ambitious princes and courtiers, should be superstitious, antichristian, and pernicious; or that it should be approved and applauded by **WORLDLY AND UNGODLY PARSONS**, to whom it ministers wealth, power, and glory; is not at all to be wondered at.—But that such a church should be patronised, commended, and willingly supported by people **PROFESSING SUPREME ALLEGIANCE TO CHRIST**, high respect for the Scriptures, and an abhorrence of all religious errors; is a matter of profound astonishment to every intelligent and simple-minded disciple of Christ.

Yet this is done by many devout conformists—through **IGNORANCE** of the antichristian doctrines and institutions of the national establishment—or on the **ASSUMPTION**, that while supporting the church as a whole, they do not sanction its individual evils—or from various other causes, enumerated elsewhere, but which there is no room to recite in this paper.—(See Tract No. 18, First Series.)

It is certain and generally conceded, that no person, without greatly sinning, can sanction what is plainly at variance with the revealed will of God. This prime protestant and scriptural principle is recognized and avowedly acted on by all evangelical Dissenters; and in associating with the Congregational Denomination, the writer is not conscious of countenancing the slightest departure from either the letter or spirit of the gospel of Christ. Let it be shown that he does, and he will cheerfully rectify the evil.

But I do charge conformists with sanctioning—and many of them knowingly—what is antiscriptural and pernicious in the highest degree. To prove this is the design of the present essay. I shall, therefore, first notice a few of the more ungodly principles of the state-religion, and secondly explain how they are sanctioned, and the sin of doing it.

FIRST.—THE FEARFUL HERESIES OF THE CHURCH.

I. IT VIRTUALLY DETHRONES THE SON OF GOD, *as the sole ruler in his kingdom*.—The supreme civil power legislates in the law church—determining what doctrines shall be preached—what worship shall be performed—what ministers shall officiate—what titles and dress they shall wear—and what stipends they shall receive. It inflicts civil pains and penalties for religious, the same as for political, disobedience. It subordinates the authority of Christ to that of the state; or rather, it annihilates that authority and establishes its own in the place of it, in numerous ecclesiastical affairs. And the church says *Amen*.

II. IT RESISTETH THE HOLY GHOST, *in his gracious and manifest operations*.—The truth which he has expressly inspired it regards as defective or erroneous. The people he has graciously enlightened and sanctified it treats as fools, fanatics, schismatics, and rebels, unless they adopt the rules and superstitious rites which ignorant men have devised. And the ministers he has graciously and evidently qualified and sent forth to preach the gospel, it casts out as presumptuous intruders into the priest's office, and despises and condemns their labours as irregular and worthless; because,

through fidelity to truth and God, they refuse to submit to prelatical ordination, and to preach notions, to perform ceremonies, and to receive subsistence in a mode at variance with the laws of heaven. It also impudently pretends to give the Holy Ghost, in ordination, to every young episcopalian entering into holy orders.

III. IT REJECTS THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, *as the entire guide of the Church.*—Many parts of the sacred code it has virtually annulled, by enacting various laws which render them totally inoperative; and it has added to the testimonies of God as interest, ignorance, or fancy suggested. It appeals to traditions, customs, councils, fathers, expediency, political analogies and advantages—as supplying the wisdom and filling up the supposed numerous deficiencies of inspiration. It admits the application of such portions of scripture only as do not directly oppose its own inventions, nor defeat its own secular purposes. The rest it reads and regards as obsolete laws, repealed by wiser and more useful acts of parliament.

IV. IT DISREGARDS VITAL GODLINESS, *as a ground of Christian privilege.*—Real conversion to God is not a prerequisite to Confirmation or to full communion in the church; nor is even a great degree of morality required. Men, void of the saving knowledge of Christ, may constantly kneel at its altars and occupy its pulpits; and there is no constitutional means of expelling them. A regular or even an occasional attendance on the outward means and ceremonies of the church ensures the privileges and consolations of religion while alive, and, what is called, a christian burial when dead. The destitution of practical piety presents no barrier to such enjoyments.

V. IT GRIEVOUSLY COERCES THE CONSCIENCE, *by impositions and punishment.*—The law-church knows nothing of evangelical kindness and charity towards Christians without its own sectarian enclosure. It condemns them all as unreasonable fanatics and heretics. It labours to degrade them in public estimation. It charges them with a destitution of patriotism and loyalty; and compels them all to support its doctrines, rites, &c. while knowing them to be unscriptural and destructive to the souls of men.

VI. IT ENSLAVES ALL CONFORMISTS, *by denying them their Christian freedom.*—As churchmen, they have no power in religious affairs. Abject and universal submission is their imperious fate. In the election of their pastors they have no voice; and in determining the source and amount of his salary they have no choice. The exercise of their minds, in understanding the scriptures, is virtually denied them. They must believe the doctrines proposed by the state, and enacted by parliament, or cease to supplicate the Deity in the parish church. Even her Majesty—anomalous as it may seem—cannot choose her own religion, and must be a good church lady, or lose her crown and kingdom for being a heretic.

VII. IT ABETS MANIFEST IMPIETY, *by enforcing iniquitous institutions.*—The ecclesiastical courts are the legalized engines of its persecuting propensities, as hundreds are annually experiencing. Its baptismal services compel sponsors to promise unconditionally to do what they know and feel

to be impossible. Its indecent marriage service requires declarations which are known to be untrue. Its catechetical instruction obliges the young to imbibe antichristian sentiments, and to utter downright falsehoods. And its clergy, by the oaths they are constrained to take, and which they are sure to break, are induced daily to perjure their souls.

VIII. IT FOSTERS THE GROSSEST SUPERSTITION, *by its unscriptural ceremonies*.—The priest cannot publicly pray, baptize, administer the sacrament, or bury a corpse, except in a white gown; nor properly preach a sermon without a black one. In christening, sponsors and the sign of the cross are as essential as the baptismal words and element. At the Lord's table, you must kneel—in reading the gospels you must stand—in reading the epistles you must sit—in repeating the creed you must look eastward,—and on mentioning the word “Jesus” you must nod or courtesy. You must feast 31 days, and fast 95, besides hallowing 52 sundays every year. You must especially keep Christmas, Good-friday, and Easter-day—and observe numerous saints' days, annually, &c.

IX. IT DECEIVES IMMORTAL SOULS, *by encouraging the most fallacious hopes*.—The young are taught that in baptism they were regenerated by the Holy Ghost, redeemed, forgiven, made members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. When confirmed they are solemnly and pompously assured of a personal interest in the favour and gracious goodness of God; are admitted into full membership in the church; and are subsequently spoken of, addressed, and treated as the unquestionable subjects of saving and sanctifying grace—even when they are evidently total strangers to its knowledge and power in the soul. The most wicked member of the law-church is dealt with precisely the same as the most holy.

X. IT ENGENDERS PRIESTCRAFT, *by inflating the clergy with gross self-importance*.—*They*, forsooth, are the only true ministers of Christ in a parish or town; and all the people, dissenters as well as conformists, are their lawful charge. *They* only are duly ordained, and the rightful successors of the Apostles. *They* only can regenerate children, or religiously instruct them. *They* only are qualified to perform the *mysteries* of the Lord's Table,—marry the living—or inter the dead. *They* only must be entitled ‘Your Reverence,’ wear gowns and cocked hats, fill every spiritual office, and receive all ecclesiastical revenues. The natural result follows: they are, with certain exceptions, supercilious, haughty, overbearing, intolerant, and avaricious, in the last extreme.

The preceding assertions I am prepared to justify, whenever any respectable clergyman, subscribing his name, shall publicly impugn their correctness.

SECONDLY.—THE GREAT SIN OF SANCTIONING THEM.

I. I SHALL SHOW IN WHAT WAY IT IS SANCTIONED.—Whoever expresses, openly or covertly, his approbation of the aforementioned antisciptural doctrines and doings, is as guilty as though he had been the original promulgator of them. “He that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.” And he that in any way sanctions a system, in which these errors form so

essential and prominent a part, necessarily sanctions them also—just as persons, who practically sanction Popery, Socinianism, Socialism, or any distinct and corporate society, sanction all the distinguishing errors and evils, as much as all the genuine truth and good, they may happen to contain. As to the *modes* of sanctioning:—"There are many ways of sharing the guilt of 'other persons' transgressions; it may be done by culpable silence, 'indolence, unconcernedness, private contribution, public countenance, and 'assistance, inward approbation, open apology, and defence. The Lord 'pardon our guilt of other persons' sins." MATT. HENRY.—Therefore, men sanction the Church of England—

- (1.) By openly professing themselves to be true members of it.
- (2.) By usually worshipping God within its consecrated walls.
- (3.) By designating it a true branch of the Church of Christ.
- (4.) By acknowledging its clergy to be genuine Christian ministers.
- (5.) By educating their children in its schools and principles.
- (6.) By being confirmed, married, or churched by its clergy.
- (7.) By interring your friends (unless unavoidable) in its cemeteries.
- (8.) By paying to its support, except under protest and compulsion.
- (9.) By filling any post or office within its unrighteous pale.
- (10.) By failing to expose and oppose it on all suitable occasions.

II. I SHALL EXHIBIT THE SIN OF SUCH CONDUCT.—It is a divine truth, that "whatsoever is not of faith is sin, and that he who doubteth is condemned if he eat." Hence, to patronize deeds directly and flagrantly opposed to the manifest will of God—such as abound in the Church of England—must be highly criminal in his sight. If it be sinful to countenance or connive at profane language, lies, and immoral conduct; it must be sinful to countenance or connive at false doctrine and antisciptural institutions. And unless it can be shown that I have grossly misrepresented the principles and procedure of the national church, (of which I am not conscious, and which I believe cannot be proved,) then those who sanction this church, with all its errors and evils, must grievously sin against God.

- (1.) They evince a sinful indifference to the authority of Christ.
- (2.) They transfer their spiritual allegiance from God to men.
- (3.) They render divine truth comparatively void and inoperative.
- (4.) They submit to acts of parliament before the word of God.
- (5.) They give a pernicious example to dependents and youth.
- (6.) They encourage the interested in their heresies and superstition.
- (7.) They distress the minds of the Saviour's faithful disciples.
- (8.) They abet the pilfering and persecution of pious Dissenters.
- (9.) They uphold a system the bible would otherwise abolish.
- (10.) They indirectly aid IN THE RUIN of immortal souls.

Further specification would be useless; for if these allegations are true, my charge against those who sanction the church, however uncharitable it may seem, is established beyond all controversy. If they be erroneous, let conformists repel them—not by clamour, invective, and personal crimination, but by reason and evidence. Let them do this, or be silent. And if they prefer truth to error, Christian obedience to spiritual rebellion, and the smiles of God to secular advantage;—let them quit the state-religion without hesitation or delay.

UNSCRIPTURAL PRAYERS
OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

By the Rev. W. THORN, Winchester.

THE adherents of the state-church are perpetually extolling its prayers, as though they were the genuine fruit of inspiration, and often much more than the Bible itself! There are even persons that condemn almost every thing else in the church, and yet attend it constantly for the sake of its beautiful prayers! Indeed, so enamoured are many people with them, or so enslaved by their habitual use, that they can comfortably worship God in no place where they are not read.

Conscious that this is a grossly erroneous estimate of the Church Prayers; I purpose to show the probable grounds of such a predilection in their favour, and then to state the reasons why they are rightly rejected by all consistent dissenters.—As usual I must be concise; but pledge myself to assert nothing as a fact, which I am not prepared to support by evidence; or as an opinion, that I am not ready to defend by legitimate argument.

FIRST.—THE GROUNDS OF THE PREJUDICE FELT IN FAVOUR OF THE CHURCH PRAYERS.

(1.) An early, pleasing, and almost inseparable, *association of them* with parental example, chiming bells, sacred music, and Gothic buildings.

(2.) The loud and general *praises of them* which people have heard from their infancy, and which they consequently regard as duly merited.

(3.) A blind but, perhaps, natural admiration of what is *venerable for age*, mysterious in expression, and of general adoption.

(4.) A fancy that the prayers which *prelates and parsons* read, and princes and nobles hear, must (like their dinners) be the best in the country.

(5.) The solemn, dignified, and *impressive manner* in which they are often read, by ministers assiduously trained for this specific duty.

(6.) The disrespectful way in which the *extempore prayers* of the chapel have been generally spoken of by ill-informed or interested conformists.

These considerations are amply sufficient to account for the prevalent feeling of most episcopalians in favour of the prayers of the church; and their influence would have been about the same had those prayers been totally destitute of the little merit they may happen to possess.

SECONDLY.—I SHALL SPECIFY VARIOUS OBJECTIONS TO THE USE OF THESE PRAYERS.

I. *Forms of prayer, read in public worship, are unscriptural.*—By prayer I mean *direct addresses to God in the shape of supplication*, as distinguished from songs of praise, and reading the Holy Scriptures. It is, then, incontrovertibly true—

(1.) That all the prayers referred to in Scripture invariably arose from, and were regulated by, *the circumstances of the occasion*.

(2.) That no case occurs in which prayers were *read from a book before a congregation*, by our Lord or any of his holy Apostles.

(3.) That there is no intimation of apostolic preachers ever *repeating the same prayer in Christian worship*, or reciting that of another.

(4.) That while several gospel sermons are preserved for our learning, not a *single congregational prayer* is recorded for our adoption.

To this may be added, that the occasional *reading* of prayers in public worship was not introduced into the churches for a great many years subsequent to the apostolic age; and that the *imposition* of forms of prayer, by bishops and princes, did not take place till the church had become grievously corrupt, and its pastors ignorant, indolent, and servile. (*See Lord King's Inquiry*, Pt. 2. ch. 2. s. 7. *Bingham's Antiq. B.* 13. ch. 5. s. 3.) The assumption, (founded on certain prayers in the *Mishna*) that during our Lord's ministry, forms of prayer were read in the synagogues, in which he often worshipped, is without the least valid foundation. (*See "Union of Church and state, &c."* p. 225-229.) Those who argue that the Lord's Prayer was intended as a *form for use*, and not as a model for imitation, must employ no other, or admit that Christ has given them a very defective manual for their public devotions. (*See Scott on Matt. vi. 9.*)

II. *The imposition of humanly composed prayers is sinful.*

(1.) This is unquestionably effected by our *political government*; as no prayers can be read in the church without its command.

(2.) Nor can any of the prayers appointed by the state *be omitted by the clergy* without a clear violation of their ordination vows.

(3.) But it is equally true that the state has not *the least scriptural* right to force its subjects to pray in terms of its own dictation.

(4.) Consequently, the adoption of those prayers is a surrender of our *Christian liberty*, and a violation of our *spiritual allegiance* to Christ.

The truth is, that popes, princes, parliaments, and prelates have no more right to enforce forms of prayer on a communion, than to determine the exact amount of love men shall feel toward God, the strength of faith they shall repose in Christ, or the zeal they shall manifest in his sacred cause.

III. *The prayers of the Church of England are highly objectionable.*

(1.) They are **POPISH IN THEIR ORIGIN**—being translations from Catholic Mass-Books—showing that while many conformists are loudly abusing the Romish worship, they are indebted to the "Mother of Harlots" for their very prayers, as well as for all the other most admired peculiarities of their church—which is, therefore, at least devotionally papistical.

(2.) They are composed of such **UNCONNECTED FRAGMENTS**, printed in such different parts of the Prayer-Book, and there is such turning backward and forward to find out what comes next; that the continuous train of thought, necessary to produce a deep and lasting impression on the heart, is repeatedly broken. Under such a disturbing process, a high and holy state of Christian feeling is next to impossible.

(3.) The **PERPETUAL REPETITION** of the same words and sentences, more than a 100 times a year, and some of them, as the Lord's Prayer and

Litany, twice as often, must, without a miracle, prevent that attention and impression which extempore prayer is calculated to produce. What churchman would like to hear the best sermon ever composed twice every Lord's day of his life? And the cases are precisely parallel.

(4.) They are **SADLY DEFECTIVE** both in amount and variety. A two-penny tract, closely printed, would embrace all the actual prayers appointed to be read over and over for ever in the state-church. Many topics, though mentioned, are not dwelt on. There is an incessant flitting from one subject to another, till the mind is rather bewildered than piously affected.—1. They contain no reference to our Missionary, Bible, or Tract Societies, Sabbath-schools, or Slavery.—2. No specific prayer is offered for the conversion of the impenitent portions of the present congregation.—3. Nor for any of the Christian dissenting communions in this country.—4. Nor dare the clergyman pray for a new-born or dying prince, or any thing else, not written in his book, till he receive a government form and order from the privy council.—(See Canon 14.)

(5.) Nothing but the influence of immemorial custom could ever reconcile thoughtful people to the *alternate reading* of prayers by the parson and clerk—who often and absurdly divide a single short sentence between them—and the frequent and needless mention of the names of the ever blessed God is not only a vain repetition but also taking the name of God in vain. There are also many quaint, puerile, and unintelligible expressions in some of the prayers which would not be tolerated in any intelligent dissenting congregation. Add to this, that in order to pray without distraction, the truly devout worshipper almost instinctively closes his eyes on all surrounding objects; while the person who reads his prayers necessarily keeps them open, and becomes subject to every exciting and disturbing incident in the sanctuary.

(6.) Many *antichristian and heterodox sentiments* are inculcated in them. Probably addresses, containing more ungodly or dangerous doctrines, were never presented to God, by professors of the Christian religion—For example,

1. In prayer, they teach the horrible doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration.
2. In prayer, they impiously designate all our kings "most religious."
3. In prayer, by implication, they teach all sinners to regard themselves as Christians.
4. In prayer, they pretend to absolve men from all their sins.
5. In prayer, they send all the wicked they inter to heaven.
6. In prayer, in fact, they tell God and men many downright and shocking falsehoods.

IV. *The unhappy influence of these prayers on the human heart.*

(1.) The constant use of them must sadly **CRAMP THE ENERGIES** of ministers when attempting to pray extempore, which, to their discredit, many of them cannot do—any more than those can make a good off-hand speech who always read their sermons. It also greatly encourages clerical indolence, and destroys the surest test of a preacher's devotional spirit. The people who regularly use the prayer-book at church are injured by it in the like manner, and to an equal degree.

(2.) Always reading the same prayers necessarily **PRODUCES FORMALITY**, and leaves the mind destitute of those fresh, holy, and powerful excitements, which are so essential to real spiritual devotion; and which free prayer,

varied as circumstances require, and as offered in the dissenting chapel, is calculated to effect. Adhering to these forms has produced a most withering spiritual influence in the hearts of the great body of conformists.

(3.) The practice, moreover, *reverts the natural order of things*. It restricts and limits our desires to the words prescribed in the book. We cannot easily or safely indulge any other unless we pause, or run the risk of reading incorrectly—whereas our desires should dictate our language, and men should speak as they “are moved by the Holy Ghost.” In fact, the graciously promised influence of the Spirit is checked and diverted by the form, and for want of an opportunity, at the moment, to give it attention or clothe it in appropriate language. The idea of the Spirit *teaching us* to pray from a printed form is absurd; and works on “the method of prayer” are totally useless to a churchman.

(4.) If read prayers are requisite to Christian worship, or if they are, abstractedly considered, much better than free—as all true church people contend—it follows, as an inevitable deduction, that God has neglected AN ESSENTIAL ACT OF KINDNESS, in giving us no prayers adapted for public service; and that the people who heard only extempore prayer from Christ and his apostles, were not so favourably or wisely dealt by as the members of our national church!

(5.) The regular use of these prayers PLEDGES EPISCOPALIANS, not only to the erroneous and dangerous doctrines they literally embody, but to all the other heresies and evils of the ecclesiastical system, of which they form so important a part, and with which they are essentially identified. Moreover, the attachment many persons feel towards these prayers, bad as they are, prevents them from sanctioning and sustaining other religious societies which they candidly admit to be, at least in all other respects, much more accordant with scripture than their own.

But enough on this head. Though printed prayers may be useful to teach children and ignorant adults to pray; or however expedient something of the kind might have been considered 300 years ago, when most of the clergy were rude and unlettered, they are surely needless in the present day, and especially for our college-taught and prelatially-ordained divines—the direct and only successors of the extempore-praying apostles!

V. *The ordinary apologies for using these forms of prayer.*

(1.) THE CLERGY COULD NOT PROPERLY CONDUCT DIVINE SERVICE WITHOUT THEM.—But why are they not able, as well as the ministers of the Kirk and the Chapel? If the habit of reading prayers have disqualified them, the sooner, the practice is abolished the better. Real piety, a knowledge of their mother tongue, and a little practice, are all the prerequisites to extempore prayer. And those who are destitute of the ability, have to blame the system which has induced it, and to regard themselves as utterly incompetent ministers of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(2.) WITHOUT A BOOK, OR A PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE OF THE PRAYERS, PEOPLE COULD NOT DEVOTELY UNITE WITH THE MINISTER.—But this would equally apply to the PREACHING of the gospel, and make it requisite that clergymen should print and distribute their sermons before delivering them to their congregations. There is not a shade of difference in the two cases. It also follows, that people never properly united in the extempore prayers of our Lord and his apostles; and that strangers or persons, without printed forms or unable to read them, cannot properly pray in the Church of England.

(3.) THEY PRESERVE A BEAUTIFUL UNIFORMITY IN THE NATIONAL WORSHIP.—That they do not preserve even the shadow of religious unanimity is a fact universally notorious—and uniformity in spiritual matters is not only never required, but without unanimity is sheer hypocrisy. Nor does it appear why there should not be uniformity in the pulpit as much as in the desk; or why the state should not compose sermons, and enforce them on the clergy and people, as well as public prayers!

Assuming that no genuine Christian would venture to defend the political imposition of prayer on the church of Christ, nor plead for the imperfections and errors contained in the existing forms; I shall only add that, the sooner the present are abandoned the better; and that all good men, who seek the well-being of their souls, and desire to conform in all things to the manifest guidance of scripture, should instantly cease to attend those places where they are constantly read.

HYPOCRITICAL PRIESTCRAFT OF APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION.

By the Rev. W. THORN, Winchester.

"I boldly assert one thing, viz: that in the primitive church, or in the time of Paul, two orders of the clergy were sufficient; that is, a priest and a deacon. In like manner, I affirm, that in the time of Paul, the PRESBYTER and BISHOP were names of the same office."—WICKLIFFE.

A GREAT deal has been recently written on what is called "Apostolic Succession." The High Church and Puseyite Party—under the influence of sectarian fear, vanity, and selfishness, has been extremely industrious in diffusing this notion as widely as possible among its credulous adherents. But, surely, a more barefaced, irrational, and mischievous cheat was never practised on the dupes of a reckless imposition, by persons pretending to intelligence of mind, sanctity of character, or honesty of purpose! I shall, therefore, attempt, in a very few words, to explain the nature, and expose the priestcraft, this notion clearly involves.

To define the nature and defend the validity of ordination among Dissenters, "with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery," (1 Tim. iv. 14.) form no part of my present object. Nor is it my purpose to inquire, whether or not there has been, in some part of the world or other, an uninterrupted succession of ORDINARY GOSPEL MINISTERS, from the days of Christ till now—all of them regularly recognized as preachers of divine truth, or formally set apart to the pastoral office, by their clerical predecessors—because this has nothing to do with the arrogant claims and assumptions of our parliamentary priesthood.

FIRST.—I SHALL EXPLAIN THE DOCTRINE OF APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION.—The advocates of this notion believe—

I. That the twelve apostles were endowed with various supernatural powers, gifts, and graces, which they had authority and ability to convey to certain CHIEF SUCCESSORS in the ministerial office; that these successors had, in their turn, equal authority and ability to endow certain others with the like supernatural powers, gifts, and graces; that such an official transmission of apostolic influence was to continue uninterrupted till the end of the world; and that it was to be affected by appropriate volitions, a prescribed formulary, and laying of hands on the heads of candidates for these sublime honours, virtues, and responsibilities.

II. That besides thus endowing and appointing primary successors—since designated "Bishops"—the apostles had authority to ordain SECONDARY PASTORS, and to qualify them to preach the gospel, "to remit transgressions," and to communicate a mysterious efficacy to the Christian Sacraments; that these inferior officers, however, did not receive powers, gifts, and graces sufficient to qualify them to ordain their successors; and that before any of them can now perform such an act, they must be ordained three times over, and must receive a larger portion of this ghostly influence;

or, in other words, must be officially brought up into the direct line of a primary apostolic succession, and become dignified prelates.

III. That the bishops of our parliamentary church are the true primary successors of the apostles—being able, without the slightest difficulty or discrepancy, to trace back their high genealogical descent, through catholic popes and prelates, to St. Peter himself—and that all the *inferior* clergy of the state religion have, through the same channel, received their subordinate authority and qualifications to minister in holy things—the medium through which this influence has flowed, for so many centuries of ignorance and corruption, having, in no degree, diminished its amount, or contaminated its heavenly and saving properties.

IV. That without this prelatical ordination, no person, however holy, learned, and otherwise endowed, should be permitted to preach the gospel or administer the rites of Christian worship; that he, being an irregular unauthorized, and unqualified meddler in sacred matters, the blessing of God will never attend his ministrations; that he should neither receive the titles nor enjoy the respect due to a real minister of Jesus Christ; and that this is the hapless condition of every protestant dissenting pastor in the kingdom, and of every presbyterian and congregational preacher in the world.

Such, in brief, is the doctrine of Apostolic Succession. It must, however, be admitted that many of the clergy and multitudes of their people entertain serious doubts respecting its validity.—*Dr. Barrow* says, “the apostles had no successors.” It is also very obscurely, if at all directly, inculcated in the acknowledged standards of the state-church. One thing is certain, that it formed no prominent part of the creed of the earliest reformers—*Archbishop Bancroft* (in 1588) being the first protestant in England who advocated the notion. Still, it may be safely averred, that it is become a very popular and convenient doctrine with most of the state-priesthood, and many of their high-church partizans. Hence an exposure of its errors and evils becomes the duty of every truly enlightened disciple of Christ.

SECOND. — THE HYPOCRITICAL PRIESTCRAFT OF APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION.

I. *It is founded on an absolute fallacy.*—The apostles *as such* could have had no successors. They had seen Christ in the flesh—were eye-witnesses of the resurrection—were direct ambassadors of God—possessed the gift of tongues—were divinely inspired—and had the power of working miracles; qualifications which none but crazy bishops would now pretend to possess. They were, moreover, laborious itinerant or missionary preachers—humble in circumstances—supported by voluntary contributions or manual industry—never lorded it over God’s heritage—never lived in palaces—nor wore mitres—nor sat in parliament—nor rolled in wealth and carriages; in all which respects they differed essentially from their pretended prelatical successors. Even a common soldier is as much a successor of Marlborough as our bishops are of the apostles. To claim apostolic succession from one ordinary apostolic practice, without exemplifying all the

rest, or at least the most distinguishing, is as absurd as for a sergeant to assume the authority of a general because they both happen to wear a sword!

II. *It places the ministerial office in jeopardy.*—If no person can regularly and efficiently preach the word and administer the ordinances of the gospel, unless he have been duly ordained by a true and genuine lineal successor of the apostles; three things must be infallibly established to support his clerical pretensions—1. That episcopacy, as held by the Church of England, is Apostolical—2. That the line of succession has never been broken, and—3. That the vices of the popes have not prevented the transmission of Apostolical power and influence. Now, not one of these positions can be sustained; and our bishops can no more prove that their ordination is traceable to Peter, than it is to Judas—nor can they be certain that wicked prelates can convey divine blessings any more than wicked parents. Besides, the validity of their ministry is made to depend wholly on ecclesiastical history, which is often false and even fabulous, and not on the prescriptions of infinite wisdom.

III. *It allies the church to the rankest popery.*—If our bishops claim succession to the apostles, it must be through Catholic ordination—for there is no other channel by which apostolic authority and virtue could reach them—and it is an indisputable fact, that our present national prelates *have* derived their ordination from men ordained by popes and cardinals. They are, consequently, more immediate successors of the pontiffs than of St. Peter, and stand in a much nearer relation to them—as we are more allied to our great grandfathers, than to ancestors of fifty generations back—and are much more likely to wear the image and adopt the principles and manners of the former than of the latter. They are, at all events, and by their own showing, the official successors of men fiercely and foully execrated by the Church of England; and owe their present gifts and authority to some of the vilest hypocrites, persecutors, libertines, and wretches that ever disgraced the annals of mankind—all of whom they must necessarily pronounce genuine ministers of Jesus Christ.

IV. *It is productive of no advantage.*—To be made successors of the apostles in either the first or second degree—supposes that men are made Apostolical. But how stands the case? We have pretended successors of those primitive ministers of Christ—who have never been converted to God—who are strangers to spirituality of mind—who know nothing of humility, and little of the gospel—men without Christian zeal, charity, or morals—materially differing in sentiment—idle in the vineyard—never converting a soul to Christ—and unable to convey spiritual instruction or consolation to the ignorant and afflicted; and these are assertions which no man of judgment and general information will deny. Where, then, is the benefit of Apostolical ordination?

V. *It is totally destitute of evidence.*—When credence is required to any position, it is naturally expected that it should be proveable by divine testimony, or an appeal to our reason and senses. But in this case there is not one of them. Reason knows nothing about it—revelation says nothing

about it—our perceptive faculties comprehend nothing about it. The supposed influence attending present Apostolic ordination can be neither smelt, felt, heard, tasted, nor seen—nor is there the slightest manifestations of it in prelate or priest—nor any sensible effect of it in the words they utter, or the elements they consecrate. Yet, it is to be received as a most important truth, to the reality of which you must attach the concerns of your never dying souls. Jugglery and transubstantiation cannot beat this—nor Hindooism exceed the fanaticism it involves. [See the REV. T. POWELL'S admirable "ESSAY ON APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION."]

VI. *It is the last resort of a defenceless cause.*—The state-clergy, unable to maintain their supercilious claims to ministerial pre-eminence over dissenting pastors, by an appeal to revelation, superior piety, greater zeal in the Saviour's cause, more useful talents, or even equal success in converting souls; have recourse to mystery and miracle, talk of successional authority and divine influence, obtained in prelatical ordination. Failing to support their falling cause and personal consequence by reason, good conduct, or an appeal to scripture, they invoke fanaticism, superstition, and ghostly fictions to their aid—as in former times, they called in the hangman, the sword, and the flames, to defend their unrighteous pretences to a monopoly of Christian virtues and clerical offices. No persons, not conscious of personal deficiencies and of the untenable position of the state-system, would ever dream of fleeing to the stupid priestcraft of Apostolic Succession for their defence.

VII. *It involves the most pernicious results.*—For example—

(1.) IT PRODUCES THE MOST ARROGANT SELF-IMPORTANCE IN THE CLERGY.—“We, and we ONLY, the Greek and Romish priests excepted, are the regular, authorised, qualified, and efficient ministers of the gospel!”

(2.) IT LIMITS THE MERCIFUL OPERATIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT—who must qualify and send forth none to preach the word and administer the Sacraments, unless they are first ordained by mitred bishops!

(3.) IT REPUDIATES THE SCRIPTURAL QUALIFICATIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTER.—The piety, wisdom, zeal, talents, &c. required by the word of God are not essential with apostolic succession, and without it, forsooth, are perfectly useless!

(4.) IT IS AS CUNNINGLY ARRESTED AS IT IS CRIMINALLY CONTRIVED.—None but prelates can convey the Holy Ghost to the ordained—therefore dissenting ministers, who may have been ordained by mere clergymen, are not in holy orders!

(5.) IT INVALIDATES THE LABOURS OF ALL PREACHERS NOT PRELATICALLY ORDAINED.—Hence, multitudes who preached Christ in the apostolic age, (Acts viii. 4, and 1 Cor. xiv. 1-4) and millions since, are regarded as useless ministers of the gospel!

(6.) IT IS AS STUPIDLY RIDICULOUS AS IT IS IMPIOUSLY PROFANE.—Drunken Church parsons rolling in gutters, and riding home in wheelbarrows, are inconceivably better ministers of Christ, than Robert Hall, Dr. Pye Smith, or Dr. Watts!

(7.) IT ATTACHES IGNORANT PEOPLE TO A BAD SYSTEM AND UNGODLY PASTORS.—The state-church is an altar that sanctifies every gift, and there is virtue only in the parish priest—who, of course, must never be deserted!

(8.) IT IS THE PARENT OF A RANK AND RUINOUS INFIDELITY.—If ignorant, idle, ambitious, immoral clergymen are successors of the apostles, and endowed with the like gifts and graces; christianity is a farce!

Such is the Apostolic Succession of the High Church party; and these are some of its results. The man that believes this heathenish doctrine is much fitter for an asylum than a pulpit!

THE CHURCH

MORE OPPOSED

TO DISSENT than TO IMMORALITY.

By the Rev. W. THORN, Winchester.

"Then cried they all again saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber."—JOHN xviii. 40.

By the CHURCH, I shall here understand the principles and genius of the parliamentary religion, with those official and lay adherents of it who feel and act in accordance with its sentiments and spirit. And by DISSENT the profession of non-conforming doctrines and worship, with the practical worshippers of God without the pale of the endowed sanctuary.

Hence, my proposition is—1. That the church, thus defined, is OPPOSED to Dissent and Dissenters, as such, irrespective of their peculiar creeds or general conduct—manifesting its enmity against the most evangelical and holy, equally with the most heretical and unrighteous among them. And—2. That the church is MORE OPPOSED to Dissent and Dissenters, as such, than it is to immoral persons and practices—evincing more dislike to pious, intelligent, and useful nonconformists, than to the most ignorant, vicious, and profligate episcopalians in the country.

Of course, I do not intend to impute to ALL state clergymen and lay conformists the offence of being more opposed to Dissent than to Immorality. Happily, there are many of both orders, especially of the latter, who are decidedly more opposed to Immorality than to Dissent. These, however, are better men than conformists, and against such our accusations will no further apply than as charging them with the sin of sanctioning a system so antisciptural and vicious as that of the national church.

That dissenting from the church of England is neither sinful in the sight of God, nor criminal in the eyes of the law, has been fully shown in a preceding paper, [No. 6, First Series;] in which it is also clearly proved that churchmen cannot accuse us of sin on account of our nonconformity, without condemning their own sect in England for previously dissenting from the Church of Rome—the Episcopalians in Scotland for dissenting from the Kirk—their brethren on the Continent for dissenting from the national religion of those countries—and their agents and missionaries among the heathen for opposing the various systems of idolatry there established.

Yet it is universally notorious that the church condemns nonconformity of every creed and character; and that its genuine tory clergy and supporters regard and treat dissenters with more discourtesy, uncharitableness, and severity, than they do the most immoral persons that conform to the state worship—or that merely keep aloof from the meeting-house. By what motives they are influenced in this matter—whether selfishness, sectarianism, apprehension, or the like, I shall not venture to determine; but I feel confident they are none of the following:—

- (1.) Not a desire to maintain the supreme authority of Christ and the Scriptures.
- (2.) Not an anxious concern for the salvation of immortal souls.
- (3.) Not a wish to promote brotherly love among all believers.
- (4.) Not a design to evince a spirit of humility and self-denial.

For the establishment of my proposition, I shall now refer the reader—

FIRST.—TO THE PRESCRIBED AUTHORITIES OF THE NATIONAL RELIGION.—As a specimen of the spirit which breathes in this system towards Dissenters, I need cite only a single canon, and explain the legal sense of its enactments.

“Whoever shall hereafter separate themselves from the communion of saints, as it is appointed by the Apostles’ rules, in the church of England, and combine themselves together in a new brotherhood, accounting the Christians who are conformable to the doctrine, government, rites, and ceremonies of the Church of England to be profane, and unmeet for them to join with in Christian profession; let them be excommunicated *ipso facto*, and not restored but by the archbishop, after their repentance, and public revocation of such their wicked errors.”—Canon IX.

To understand the real import and force of this canon, let it be observed that a person thus *excommunicated*, “Is disabled from doing any act that is required to be done by one that is a true and legal man; he may not serve on juries; nor be witness in any court; *nor bring an action; either real or personal, to recover lands or money due to him*; and if within 40 days after sentence denounced upon him, he shall not submit to the judgement of the court, he shall *be taken up and imprisoned in the county gaol, without bail or mainprize, until he be reconciled to the church*, and until such reconciliation be certified by the Bishop.”

This is the doctrine of the law-church, and but a mere sample of the spirit which pervades its entire ecclesiastical system. *To this EVERY CLERGYMAN subscribes; and EVERY ATTENDANT on the endowed worship gives it his best, because his practical, sanction.* The infrequency of its specific execution arises from the restraining acts of the civil legislature, and the tolerant sentiments of the population generally. But the unholy and cruel spirit of the hierarchy against dissenters is best developed by its manifest influence on the minds of the clergy and their high-church supporters.—I shall therefore appeal—

SECONDLY.—TO THE CONDUCT OF THE PRIESTHOOD AND THEIR CONSISTENT SUPPORTERS.—Here I shall enumerate several striking particulars—which being notorious and of every day occurrence will require no enlargement or authentication to ensure belief. See it then,

I. *In the past history of the church*—This consists, to a very great and fearful degree, in the persecution of the puritans and nonconformists of by-gone years. The bishops and clergy, while tolerant towards almost every species of vice and sin against God, showed the most marked and savage disposition against those enlightened, holy, and conscientious men, who refused a full and minute compliance with the shocking errors and superstitious rites of the state religion. They confiscated their property, imprisoned their persons; branded, abused, banished, burnt, or hung them by thousands—greatly exceeding in the number of their victims those of the Romish priests and prelates of this nation.

II. *In the present persecution of dissenters.*—While the high church party generally passes over the legal and moral offences of drunkenness, swearing, lying, sabbath-breaking, gambling, debauchery, &c. as merely

reprehensible doings; it is constantly sending pious and worthy dissenters to prison for refusing to attend, or directly to support, the state-services. It coolly claps them into the infamous spiritual courts—(a fine counterpart of the Spanish Inquisition)—and one is likely to remain in jail longer for refusing to pay church-rates than for stealing another man's property—*Baines* and *Thorogood* to wit! It will also canonically inter the greatest profligate conformist; while it refuses, whenever it can, the most holy dissenter the rites of burial. Take Parson *Escott* as an example!

III. *In the pulpit phillipics of the priesthood.*—If the clergy pour forth any considerable amount of invective and abuse in their sermons, if any topic excite unusually severe and condemnatory remarks; it is sure to be the awful sin of schism—the dreadful evils and wickedness of dissent!—as the worshippers in *our cathedral*, as well as in most other churches, can fully testify! Immorality may not be totally overlooked, or go entirely unreprieved; but it is the impiety of forsaking the only true apostolic ministry in this country that stirs up the bile of the man in the pulpit!

IV. *In the writings of its honest partizans.*—To argue with dissenters is what we rather court than deprecate; and to point out and condemn any real and provable errors and heresies among us is their Christian duty. But to anathematize us for merely dissenting from their system, as they dissent from other churches just as scriptural as their own, only betrays the weakness of their cause and the virulence of their disposition against us. And this they are perpetually doing in their numerous books, periodicals, and tracts. One instance, as a specimen. In a work written by a clergyman and recommended by the present *Bishop of London*, Dissent is declared to be “a greater sin than drunkenness,” and, of course, than fighting, cheating, lying, &c. or any crime of which drunkenness is the prolific source!

V. *In the leasing and letting of property.*—For example, the *DEAN* and *CHAPTER* of *Westminster* regularly insert a clause in their leases of the church-lands under their controul, providing that if a dissenting chapel be erected on any of them, or any house thereon be ever used for dissenting worship, the whole shall be immediately forfeited to their godly reverences! But they insert no clauses against erecting *gambling houses, beer shops, or brothels*; of which latter, at least, there are numbers on their ecclesiastical property! It is much easier to get ground to build a theatre in most parishes than a meeting house; and the *home missionary* is often more opposed by the clergy than the greatest profligate in the village.

VI. *In trade, commerce, and employment.*—The orthodox clergy and their hearty adherents, will seldom deal with a pious and consistent dissenter, if they can possibly avoid it, nor employ a tradesman or labourer who does not shun the conventicle! At the same time they make no scruple in dealing with or employing, drunkards, swearers, gamblers, sabbath-breakers, whoremongers, or any other immoral person in the city, town, or parish, who calls himself a churchman, and is willing to vociferate in favour of the parsons at parish feasts, and to vote for them at church-rate meetings, and for tory candidates at contested elections!

VII. *In their associations and engagements.*—They are often found

uniting, in apparent cordiality, with immoral persons at public dinners in taverns or any where else, if they profess themselves churchmen. Evangelical clergymen can conscientiously and religiously co-operate with heterodox and drunken clergymen. But they would fancy themselves degraded and defiled by entering a dissenting chapel, or otherwise spiritually combining with the most holy, learned, and eloquent nonconformists in the kingdom, in order to promote the cause of morals and godliness.—(Witness *Bishop Denison*, of Salisbury, and the *Bible Society*!)

VIII. *In their friendships and aversions.*—They are often all courtesy and kindness to the most ungodly people in the place, particularly if they are in good circumstances—bowing, smiling, visiting, and the like, with manifest tokens of high approbation—provided there is no dissent about them. But they pass the dissenting pastor and his people without either noticing them at all, or with the look of haughty disdain, as towards persons who have committed some unpardonable sin, or were unworthy to walk on the same earth with themselves! This applies chiefly to the clergy.

IX. *In the education of the young.*—However clever, pious, and worthy a youth may be, they will afford him no secular instruction in their national or charitable schools, unless he attend the church on sundays and learn their heterodox and soul-destroying catechism—or, in other words, only on the condition of conforming to their system—which is, in effect, to no practically dissenting youth whatever. Whereas, they will teach and assist the most unpromising, wicked, and immoral children, whose parents are too ignorant to perceive the errors of the church, or too careless to prevent their children from imbibing them.

X. *In the distribution of charity.*—Seldom is any petitioner overlooked because he is immoral. But the pious dissenter, however necessitous, is generally sent empty away. And this is the case when the alms are the donation of the dead, or the contribution of the parish at large. The alms-house, though erected and endowed by Catholic munificence, must be filled with members of the state sect and no other. Though the clergy are supported by the parish at large—the poorest of the people indirectly subscribing toward their maintenance, and though they claim all the population as being under their religious superintendence—their benevolent and charitable institutions are almost invariably sectarian, and not parochial. While those who receive “the gifts” at the hands of the priests, their wives, or prejudiced female assistants, must henceforth surrender their religious independence, become obsequious devotees of old mother church, and treat the clerical almoner with the most profound reverence and admiration—and, as a matter of course, avoid the meeting-house!

The above assertions are incontrovertible—being founded on the facts of history, observation, and experience; and, with the EXCEPTIONS previously made, will apply to the church, its priesthood, and chief supporters.

That a system which involves such principles and produces such results, must be antichristian and sinful, will be denied or doubted only by persons strangely blinded by ignorance or prejudice, or interested in preserving it as a source of gain, spiritual quietude, or worldly respectability.

STATE CLERGY

THE CHIEF OPPRESSORS OF THE PEOPLE.

By the REV. W. THORN, Winchester.

"We entirely subscribe to the doctrine, that the Church is the true and only fortress of Conservative principles, and that to her the gratitude of every patriot is chiefly due for the glorious "victory which those principles have achieved."—TIMES, Aug. 11, 1841.

To the doctrine propounded in this passage—That the State Church is the true and only formidable fortress of Toryism, and that it was chiefly through its agency a majority of pro-corn-law members was returned to the House of Commons at the last election—1841—I can fully subscribe. But that it was a GLORIOUS victory of the clergy over starving and helpless millions, meriting the gratitude of a single genuine patriot; none but the heartless oppressors of the poor, and the selfish sycophants of the rich, will venture to assert.

The tory Times, however, substantially supports the sentiment contained in the heading of this tract, That the State Clergy are the Chief Oppressors of the People. And it is this specific evil of the national establishment I now intend to expose in as clear and concise a manner as I am able.

Of course, I do not mean to indicate, that among our 18,000 state-parsons there are not numerous benevolent men, who (resisting the influence of their system) are really anxious, even at the sacrifice of many of their own comforts, to improve the condition of the poor. But I do mean, that as a body they are too correctly characterized in the above designation of them—being placed (says the MORNING CHRONICLE, FEB. 26, 1842,) "in a position of horrible and unnatural opposition to the public weal."

FIRST.—THE CLERGY ARE REAL OPPRESSORS OF THE PEOPLE.

I. BY EXCESSIVE EXACTIONS.—Their revenues are immense. The endowed pastors of less than half the population of England and Wales receive of public money not less than 8 millions a year; being as much as is received by all the other state-clergy of christendom, with 30 times as many hearers. All this is paid by the people, as proved in a former paper. (See Tract 14.) The tithes are indirect taxes levied on the consumers of home-raised produce. These, for the most part, are the industrious classes; who have to pay full ten per cent. for the necessities of life more than they would be charged were tithes abolished. The consumers have also indirectly or directly to pay all parliamentary grants for building and repairing churches, assisting curates, and rewarding tithe commissioners; church rates and easter dues; and to make good the national loss sustained by granting the bishops and clergy, cathedrals and colleges, immense estates, gorgeous palaces and numerous parochial properties—so that, in the whole, the poor are robbed by the clergy of nearly 2s. out of every 10s. they earn and expend for the support of themselves and families; and that too without increasing their income a shilling a year. If this be not oppression, there is no such thing in the world! It is, indeed, pleaded that these exactions are *legal*, and

should be cheerfully borne by the people! And so it was legal some time ago to hang and burn the Puritans; who, on the same principle, should have cheerfully submitted to the halter at Tyburn and the flames in Smithfield!

II. BY EXTENSIVE PILFERINGS.—It is now almost universally admitted that a fourth part of the tithes and other incomes of the church were formerly given to the poor; and that the bishops and clergy, who received the rest, kept the churches in repair out of their revenues. But at present the parsons swallow up all the property and receipts of the state-worship; and, like the insatiate grave, are daily crying aloud for more. The poor are supported by the parish, and often by people who have scarcely food for themselves—beggaring each other by fearful degrees; and the churches are generally repaired by rates levied on all the inhabitants—often at the point of the sword. Besides, many of the charities left for educating the young and assisting the necessitous have, to a great extent, been applied by the clergy to their own use, regardless of the will of the donors and the wants of the needy. Cases most flagrant and numerous might be cited. Those in our own neighbourhood are not the least glaring and atrocious—as persons acquainted with the *Hospital of St. Cross*, and the *College of Wykeham*, in this city, are fully aware.—To cloak, in some measure, the exactions and robbery of the clergy, and to avert the wrath of the poor, our parsons and their wives form Clothing Societies (chiefly with other people's money) for the destitute; give away a few coals and lend a few blankets at Christmas; and talk kindly and compassionately to the distressed. They first beggar the people, live in ease and often in luxury at their expence; and then, by way of softening their own misconduct, and appearing as good-natured gentlemen and ladies, return about a penny in the pound of the money they are constantly taking from them!

III. BY POLITICAL OPPOSITION.—No measure can be proposed in parliament for raising the lower classes, and improving their social condition; especially if it tend, in the smallest measure, to infringe on the importance of the state priesthood; which the clergy do not oppose with a zeal and energy they never display in resisting the operations of Satan himself. Whatever rights and privileges the people have—and they are miserably few—they have secured in opposition to the endowed priesthood. Have they not hitherto resisted the Extension of the Franchise to the industrious classes—and Voting by Ballot, to protect the humble from the vengeance of the rich? Did they not strive to prevent Parliamentary and Corporate Reform—through fear of putting power in the hands of the people? And were they not as active, as fierce, as arbitrary, and as reckless of consequences as so many tyrants, at the last election, in compelling all under their domination to vote for men professedly pledged to support the Corn Laws; to preserve their own enormous salaries, which are regulated by the price of corn, and to keep the multitude in a state of dependence and want? And, with all their canting kindness to the poor, they would do the like again, whenever an opportunity presented itself. For the result of their exertions read our quotation from the *Times Newspaper*.—Their

pleas and apologies for such conduct are too absurd to require a moment's notice in this paper.

IV. BY DISCOURAGING KNOWLEDGE—or any thing worthy of the name, among the lower and labouring classes. Before Dissenters bestirred themselves—which they did as soon as they had the means—to educate the poorer classes, they were almost totally neglected by the state-paid priesthood. The people grew up as ignorant and brutish as heathens around them, unheeded and unpitied ; and but for the activity of the non-conformists, the clergy would unquestionably neglect them still. Of late, however, sectarian jealousy has urged them onward ; and now, to get the young into their schools is an object of intense interest, and the prolific parent of bribery, cajolery, and intimidation. But the amount and quality of the instruction conveyed to the minds of the poor, in almost every case, are of the lowest and most trifling order. A fear seems to pervade these gentlemen that the mass of the nation will become too wise to believe whatever their teachers say, or to approve the system by which the priesthood gain their wealth. And, then, no child can be taught to read or write in their national schools, unless they learn the soul-deceiving doctrines of the Church Catechism—and by which the power of the priest, virtually to regenerate souls, through saying a few words and sprinkling a little water on their heads, is received as the doctrine of the Bible ! Let a good sound scheme of national education, calculated really to elevate and benefit the poor, be fairly proposed, and the greatest adversaries to its adoption will be found in the national clergy—at least, unless they should be metamorphosed into quite different beings from what they have hitherto been. Probably their argument for such conduct is, that the poor are better servants, less troublesome neighbours, and more happy in themselves, when they are but imperfectly educated, than when their heads are filled up with knowledge !

V. BY GHOSTLY DOMINATION.—The exercise of private judgment in spiritual matters, especially among the humbler portions of society, is deprecated by the clergy, and virtually denied them by the church. The people must be kept in a state of dependence on the priest, whose word they are to take for every thing. He is a successor of the apostles, has received an unction from the bishop, and must be always relied on, and never disputed with, particularly by the 'lower orders.' His hearers are to read 'after' him, and to do what he enjoins without doubting—even though he be a drunken, gambling, ignorant, unconverted sinner himself. The result is, that the minds of the church people are stunted as if a blast from beneath had passed over them. Their religious independence is gone—they are sectarian vassals—and the parish priest is the spiritual slave-driver of his flock—nor is he without a *flopper* to enforce his commands. To maintain his importance and superiority over the people is a point never lost sight of ; and if it do not consist in greater wisdom, piety, and usefulness, it must in authority, supercilious airs, and wonder-working pretensions ! As an excuse for this, the inability of the poor and unlearned to understand the scriptures, without the aid of the clergyman, is frequently urged ; and also their danger

of running into error without his guardianship. Thus the clergy oppress the poor and industrious classes in body, soul, and spirit; and yet have the courage to designate themselves the friends of the poor, and their system "The Poor Man's Church!!"

SECONDLY.—THE CLERGY ARE THE CHIEF OPPRESSORS OF THE PEOPLE.—This arises from several circumstances which I shall briefly mention, There may be many others equally disposed with the parsons to keep down the poor and industrious classes; but there is no other order of men in the country possessing the same means of doing it.

I. FROM THEIR DISPERSION THROUGHOUT THE NATION.—They are found in every parish—even with only 50 or 100 inhabitants—and in some parishes two or three of them. They seem to claim admission into every house, and to converse with the inmates dogmatically on any subject they choose. This is an advantage which none but themselves possess.

II. THEIR INFLUENCE OVER THE IGNORANT IS EXTENSIVE.—And it is their policy to foster this ignorance in order to maintain their influence. They are the men that marry, baptize, church, and bury the people—and to whom the latter are ordered to look up, as to scholars, divines, and representatives of Her Majesty, the head of the church—if not of God himself—always able to LAY A GHOST! and to open and shut the kingdom of heaven at pleasure!!

III. THEY HAVE AMPLE LEISURE FOR ANY POLITICAL JOB.—Their clerical duties, except in a few cases, are soon performed—the rest of their time they can devote to any purpose they please—in canvassing for pro-corn-law members—deluding the poor—threatening them with loss of parochial charities—denouncing damnation on all who vote for liberals, or otherwise terrifying the poor into submission to their dictation.

IV. THEY ARE INDEPENDENT OF THEIR PEOPLE.—Whatever they do—however oppressive and base, and even though they empty their churches by their misconduct; they sustain no pecuniary sacrifice. The lawyer, surgeon, and tradesman might suffer from their tyranny, but the parson bids the people defiance: his income is safe, and he can act the oppressor with impunity; and he does it freely.

V. THEY ARE CONNECTED WITH THE HIGHER CLASSES, either as relatives or dependents. They received their present preferments from the gentry, and look for others from the same quarter. Hence, they are ready to become the parish tools of the 'squires, and to do any dirty work their patron may appoint.

VI. THEY GENERALLY CARRY THE BAG OF THE BENEVOLENT.—The parson must distribute the alms of the charitable, and can give them when and to whom he pleases. Hence he has the power of oppression, which he seldom fails to exert against dissenters.

(1.) **MARK THE RETRIBUTIVE JUSTICE OF PROVIDENCE.**—Men have incorporated Christianity with the state, and rendered the priest independent of the people—and the result is that the evils are felt in each grade of life, and especially by the victims of political mischief—the poor and needy.

(2.) **LEARN THE NECESSITY OF A GREAT RELIGIOUS REFORM.**—Until the church be separated from the state—and the ministry, with all religious ordinances, be supported on the voluntary principles of the New Testament, the poor will always be oppressed, and the nation ever remain in a state of contention.

(3.) **CONSIDER THE SUICIDAL POLICY OF ENCOURAGING THE CLERGY.**—Men minister to the importance and domination of the parsons, and then, like spaniels, seem to crouch the nearer the more they are lashed by their influence. Greater folly was never displayed by a suffering priest-ridden people!!

(4.) **THE STATE-CLERGY SHOULD BE UNIVERSALLY DISFRANCHISED.**—They are government officers as much as excisemen, collectors of taxes, or soldiers in active service; and should never be allowed to meddle in politics or municipal contest, any more than their fellow-officers. Till this, or some other great reform, be effected, there is no prospect of any material improvement in the condition of the poor and industrious classes of the people.

THE NATIONAL CHURCH

A MERE POLITICAL INSTITUTION.

By the Rev. W. THORN, Winchester.

IN a former paper, (No. 20, First Series, to which the reader is requested to refer,) it is shown that "The National Church is a Creature and Vassal of the State." In the present it is intended to prove that, in its Origin, Head, Agents, Members, Services, Laws, Support, Rewards, and Punishments, it is "A Mere Political Institution."

By the "National Church" is meant the state system of religion in this country, as founded on Royal Edicts and Acts of Parliament—endowed out of Public Property—allied to the Civil Power—upheld by the sword of the magistrate—and subject to his absolute and exclusive domination.

It may be taken for granted that the "Kingdom of Christ," as explained in the New Testament, and as exemplified by evangelical dissent in this country, is not political in its origin, head, agents, members, services, laws, support, rewards, or punishments; and that no earthly power has the least right to derange his plans, assume his authority, or secularize his spiritual system.

But in confirmation of this judgment it may be proper to cite the sentiments of one or two eminent church clergymen on the point. REV. T. SCOTT:—"We should always remember that 'the kingdom of Christ is not of this world,' it cannot be promoted by carnal weapons or means of any kind, or by any party; nor accommodated to any temporal interests; AND EVERY ATTEMPT OF THIS KIND IS INCONSISTENT, UNSCRIPTURAL, AND UNHOLY."

ARCHBISHOP WHATELY:—"The occasion on which he spoke (the words, JOHN xviii. 36,) was, when on his trial before a Roman Governor, for TREASON,—for a design to subvert, or in some way interfere with, the established government. To this charge it is plain Pilate understood him to plead, NOT GUILTY; and gave credit to his plea. Pilate therefore must have taken the declaration, that Christ's 'kingdom is not of this world,' as amounting to a renunciation of all secular coercion,—all forcible measures in behalf of religion. And we cannot, without imputing to our blessed Lord a fraudulent evasion, suppose him to have really meant any thing different from the sense which he knew his words conveyed."

Whatever were the incidental origin of the existing evangelical dissenting societies of this country, they certainly were not created by any act of the civil legislature, but for the most part in direct opposition to it; nor can they now be regarded in any sense or degree as political institutions, even though the shield of the state protect them in the peaceable enjoyment of their Christian privileges; any more than a private family can be called political because policemen guard it against the violent intrusion of ruffianly burglars.

It may be added, that for members of religious societies to act the ADDITIONAL part of politicians, is not only admissible but necessary; unless our temporal affairs—on which our spiritual usefulness greatly depends—are to be solely under the dominion and direction of "heathen men and publicans." And, further, that as persons may be Christians and lawyers, surgeons, carpenters, and tailors, without being political lawyers, surgeons, carpenters, or tailors; so they may be Christians and politicians without being political Christians, or their creed and worship political Christianity.—A distinction as plain as it is important in the present inquiry. The national church is—

I. POLITICAL IN ITS ORIGIN.—This law-church, as at present constituted, was founded on royal edicts and acts of parliament. It was instituted little more than 300 years ago, by 26 Henry VIII. ch. 1. Most of its rules, rites, and notions, were adopted from popery—some from the Bible—and a few from collateral sources. But as a state system, allied to the civil power, under the controul and guidance of government, and sustained by general taxation, it then had its beginning, and can claim no higher or holier origin. It is, in fact, as purely political in its origin, as any other society or institution created by parliament, and upheld by the authority and sword of the state.

II. POLITICAL IN ITS HEAD.—A citation from the *Act of Supremacy*, still in force, will place this doctrine in the clearest point of light.—“Be it enacted by the authority of this present parliament, that “the King our Sovereign Lord, his heirs and successors, Kings of this “realm; shall be taken, accepted, and reputed, the only supreme head on “earth of the Church of England, and shall have and enjoy annexed and “united to the imperial crown of this realm, as well as the title and style “thereof, as all honours, dignities, immunities, profits, and commodities, “to the said dignity and supreme head belonging and appertaining; and “that our Sovereign Lord, &c. shall have full power and authority, to visit, “repress, redress, reform, order, correct, retain, and amend, all such “errors, heresies, abuses, contempts, and enormities, whatsoever they be, “which by any manner of spiritual authority or jurisdiction, ought to be “lawfully reformed, repressed, &c.”

III. POLITICAL IN ITS AGENTS—the clergy and their lay assistants.—(1.) *In their appointment and subjection.*—*Bp. Warburton*, an unexceptionable authority on this head, says, “That no ecclesiastic of “the national church can exercise his functions without the magistrate’s “appointment or allowance; That no convocation or synod has a right to “sit without express permission of the civil magistrate; and That no “member of the established church can be excommunicated or expelled the “society, without the consent or allowance of the magistrate.”

(2.) *In their grades and honours.*—The dignified clergy, like secular peers and noblemen, have their high-sounding worldly titles, as “Your Grace,” and “Your Lordship,” with seats in the national legislature. They are “Most”—“Right”—and “Very”—Reverend and Venerable functionaries. Their grades, powers, and pay, correspond with those of the civil servants of the state.—There are, and probably these are not all,

Archbishops	Lord Bishops	Suffragans	Chancellors	Archdeacons
Vicars General	Deans	Rural Deans	Prebendaries or	Canons
Minor Canons	Rectors	Vicars	Perpetual Curates	Curates

receiving from £50 to £20,000 a year for their respective duties, in the different posts and localities assigned them by the state.

(3.) *In their courts and Offices.*—Like the civil branch of the kingdom, the Hierarchy has its Courts of Convocation—Arches—Prerogative—Peculiars—Consistory, &c. with their Judges, Registrars, Proctors,

Advocates, &c. all political from the top to the bottom.—“To the ARCH-BISHOPS belong 26 Chancellors and their attendants, 24 Registrars with their clerks, 24 Gentlemen Apparitors, 120 Inferior Apparitors, and 48 Proctors.—Under the BISHOPS, there are 60 Archdeacons, and these have 60 courts, to which belong Commissioners, Officials, and Surrogates; 60 Registrars, 120 Proctors, and 200 Apparitors. So that the number belonging to Archbishops, Bishops, Archdeacons, and their courts and offices are judged to be no less than 10,000 persons.”

IV. POLITICAL IN ITS MEMBERS.—As the officers and members of a freemason's lodge are necessarily freemasons, so the ministers and members of a political church are necessarily political. In *other relations* they may be Christians or they may not; they may be courtiers or cobblers; may talk over national affairs or hold their peace; but they must be political conformists, *because* they belong to a political society. Indeed, they themselves so identify their piety and politics, as to regard dissenters as but half Englishmen, and even disloyal subjects, because they do not worship in the parliamentary meeting-house. Further, to become practical members of the state religion requires no personal godliness;—to be christened and confirmed, *according to law*, by political parsons, are all the essentials for complete membership. In fact, most churchmen consider themselves entitled to every political post and emolument, simply because they belong to the state-church, of which the Queen is the political head.

V. POLITICAL IN ITS SERVICES.—They must worship only in parliamentary appointed buildings, attend only on a parliamentary ordained priesthood, believe only in parliamentary sanctioned creeds, and observe only the rites and ceremonies enacted by parliament. “The Prayer Book is only an act of Parliament,” and must be scrupulously observed, like any other legislative act, and for the same reasons. Its being imbued with scriptural truth, and enforcing spiritual obligations, in no way affects its political character. The words and sentiments of the Bible, when incorporated in our acts of Parliament, become parts and parcels of our ordinary political laws, and as such only are regarded and enforced. In the same way the legislative adoption of various portions of revelation, in the creeds and services of the state-church, places them on a political basis, and gives them an entirely political character. By churchmen they are received and used, because they are enjoined by the state, and not as inculcated by the Almighty—whose authority therein is intercepted and set aside by the intervention and assumptions of the civil power.

VI. POLITICAL IN ITS LAWS.—The codes, canons, rubrics, &c. of the state-church, were all enacted by the civil power; and it is this circumstance only which gives them force and validity in the country. By these parliamentary enactments the clergy and members of the church are ever to regulate their religious course and conduct; and it is for neglecting or violating these, and these only, they can be criminal or punished. To offend against the word of God, *as such*, is no recognized offence in the state-church, nor at all, unless embodied in acts of parliament, and im-

pressed with the seal of the chief magistrate. On the contrary, the church often punishes men for complying with the word of God, and sinning against the Book of Common Prayer—the Rev. Mr. Head, of Feniton, to wit.—Moreover, the political government is constantly legislating in church matters the same as in those of the funds, army, or trade.

VII. POLITICAL IN ITS SUPPORT.—It is maintained by direct or indirect taxation on the entire population, just like our troops and sinecurists. The Christian scheme of voluntary contribution, (though often generously practised in religious affairs by benevolent conformists) is alien from the principles and laws of the state-church. The tax-gatherer and tithe-agent are employed to enforce, by distraint or severer measures, the demands of the clergy; and they are abetted by bailiffs and soldiers, prepared to execute judgment on the conscientious withholder of such anti-christian claims. And every year parliamentary grants to an immense amount are forcibly transferred from the pockets of a poor and industrious population to the ample coffers of a pampered and often useless priesthood.

VIII. POLITICAL IN ITS REWARDS.—When the officers and agents of the law-church conduct themselves to the satisfaction of their political superiors, they are, (like subalterns in the army or navy,) advanced to higher posts, to more lucrative, and less onerous, cures—from a parish priest to a lord bishop—from less to greater authority—and from hundreds to thousands a year. And with the possibility and, perhaps, the prospect of such secular advantages before their eyes, they mostly act a politic part, and obsequiously stoop to the patron, to secure some golden prize in the lottery of the church. And—

IX. POLITICAL IN ITS PUNISHMENTS.—An offence against the church is punished just in the same manner as an offence against the state—by the same agents, and often with much greater severity. Its “weapons are *carnal*,” and are wielded with fearful violence by the Janizaries of the church. This is particularly the case—not when men curse and swear, get drunk, and desecrate the sabbath—but when the money-claims of the grasping and insatiate clergy are not forthcoming. For though the parson piously sends the vilest wretch he inters to heaven—he can send the poor conscientious Christian to jail for not paying a shilling church-rate or a sixpenny Easter offering.

I have no space left for lengthened comment—the intelligent reader will draw his own conclusions. He cannot however fail to perceive the secularized and degraded condition of the state-church, its ministers and members, compared with the elevated standing of evangelical dissent, its pastors and people, who acknowledge the Divine Being only as their spiritual head, and His Inspired Word as their only and all-sufficient religious directory.

One point is plain and incontrovertible, that, by belonging to a political society, every religious Conformist is necessarily a “**POLITICAL CHURCHMAN**”—and that there is not, correctly speaking, a “**POLITICAL DISSENTER**” in the country;—for however Nonconformists may engage in politics, yet, as belonging to a purely spiritual communion, they can be regarded only in their religious or Christian capacity.

“THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS”!! IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

By the REV. W. THORN, Winchester.

“HER PRIESTS HAVE VIOLATED MY LAW, AND PROFANED MY HOLY THINGS: THEY HAVE
“PUT NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE HOLY AND PROFANE: NEITHER HAVE THEY SHewed
“DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE UNCLEAN AND THE CLEAN.”—Ezek. xxii. 26.

IT will not be denied, by any attentive reader of the New Testament, that none but manifestly converted, enlightened, and holy men of God were recognized as preachers of the Gospel in the apostolic churches; and that none were acknowledged as members of any Christian society who did not make a credible and practical profession of Christianity. If others were found to have entered the primitive pulpits or to have intruded themselves into the communion of the saints, they were either speedily reclaimed or formally expelled. In proof of these assertions numerous passages of scripture might be cited—but it may suffice to refer the reader to the following—Rom. xv. 6. 1 Cor. i. 2-10; v. 11. 2 Cor. vi. 14-18. Eph. v. 11-12. 2 Thess. iii. 6-14.

It is equally manifest that the first organized Christian societies exercised their own judgments on the qualifications of the ministers who came or were sent to instruct them, and on the character of all candidates for religious fellowship with them—receiving such as they approved, and rejecting those they deemed erroneous or unsuitable. And this is as reasonable as it is scriptural, and as applicable to an association of believers as to any secular fraternity. To constitute candidates for the ministry or the Lord's table sole judges of their own fitness, would open the door of every society, to persons who might thereby bring additional guilt on their souls, and ruinous mischief and disgrace upon the communion at large.

The occasional reference to the Parables of the “Tares and the Wheat,” “The Net and the Fishes,” &c. in defence of an unrighteous fellowship in the church, is made in gross ignorance of their manifest import, which unquestionably is not to destroy all Christian discipline among us; and which perversion fully acted upon, would soon clear the way to consequences the most dishonourable and disastrous to the cause of genuine godliness.—SEE Mark iv. 10. Rom. xiv. 1. 2 Cor. v. 11; xi. 4. Phil. ii. 29. 1 John, iv. 1. 2 John, 10.

Nor will it be denied by any one, duly acquainted with the great bodies of Evangelical Dissent in this country, that they knowingly admit no preacher into their pulpits, or members into their churches, without satisfactory evidence of their being regenerated and sincere disciples of Christ. And if, after all proper precautions taken by the churches to preserve purity of communion, ungodly persons are discovered in their pulpits or churches, measures are at once adopted for their expulsion, according to the examples of the primitive societies.

And if at any time seceders have failed to rid themselves of an unholy or incompetent minister, it has arisen from the fact, that the laws of the state-church, which give the clergyman a life interest in his house, glebe, and parochial revenues, are applied to the Dissenting minister, securing to him his office and endowments, (if any,) against the will of his people, and in violation of the great principles of evangelical nonconformity.

But what is the case in the national establishment? “The Communion of Saints” is recognized in the creed; and with the creed it terminates. It is the Communion of saints and sinners—of light and darkness—the children of God and the children

of the wicked one. Nor is this occasional, but constant; not partial, but universal; not incidental, but in accordance with the canons and traditions of the state-worship. It is found in the pulpits and at the altars of the national sanctuary—among its first dignitaries and humblest functionaries—its noble and pauper communicants; in fact, in every class and grade of the society.

FIRST.—THE NATURE OF THIS COMMUNION—which may be regarded as lay and clerical.

I. LOOK AT ITS CLERICAL COMMUNION.—And here I shall quote the language of a *High Church Periodical*, as a just exposition of the subject:

“*First*—The office of clergymen is sought by the very last people who ought to receive it. However brainless or profligate a youth may be, he still must enter into holy orders, because his friends have property or interest in the church. Perhaps they select him first, in preference to his brothers, because he happens to be the dunce of the family.

“*Secondly*—The system directly operates, not only to keep ability and piety at the lowest point amidst the clergy, but to render that portion of them which may be forced into orders, useless to the church.

“*Thirdly*—The clergy and laity are separated from, and arrayed against, each other. The minister has no interest in conciliating, preserving, and increasing the flock; its favours cannot benefit, and its hostility cannot injure, him. To give all this the most comprehensive powers of mischief, almost any man may, so far as concerns ability and character, gain admission into holy orders. A clergyman may be destitute of religious feeling—he may be grossly immoral—he may discharge his duties in the most incompetent manner, and may lose his flock—he may do almost any thing short of legal crime, and still he will neither forfeit his living, nor draw on himself any punishment.”—*Blackwood's Magazine*.

The fruit of such admissions into the state-pulpits, and of such connivance at impiety in the state-priesthood, is so painfully and extensively manifest, that no honest and sensible man will deny it.—

(1.) There are large numbers of UNCONVERTED ministers in the church. Pious and intelligent episcopalians have stated their belief that only about 3000, or one sixth of them, are real Christians.

(2.) There are large numbers of HETERODOX ministers in the church. This is clear from their public contentions and strenuous advocacy of every known creed—from sheer Popery to rank Antinomianism.

(3.) There are large numbers of INCONSISTENT ministers in the church—whose preachings and writings evince that they disbelieve many things they solemnly, daily, and officially teach.

(4.) There are large numbers of IMMORAL ministers in the church—men who not only forget their calling, but who live in the constant and open violation of the moral laws of God.

And yet these constitute the CLERICAL “*Communion of Saints*” in the Church of England—being professedly of one faith—of one heart—of one aim; occasionally meeting in the kindest fellowship—addressing each

other as "dear brethren" in the Lord—and all exulting in their *unity* as episcopalian successors of the apostles of Jesus Christ!

II. LOOK AT ITS LAY COMMUNION.—Contemplate the persons who usually communicate at the national altars, and you will find them as diverse in sentiment, state, character, and conduct, as the clergy who administer the consecrated elements to them. I shall not be charged with a perversion of facts, nor the exaggeration of evils, by classifying the communicants of the state-church in the following order—

(1.) *Persons converted by the grace of God*—who rely on the atonement of Christ for Salvation, and on the influence of the Holy Spirit for Sanctification—and whose lives are consistent with their Christian profession.

(2.) *Persons who have no spiritual life at all*—who are ignorant of divine light and truth—who feel no concern for their own salvation, or for the glory of Christ in the world—the victims of indifference.

(3.) *Persons given up to worldly pleasures and pursuits*;—who figure at balls—frequent bowling greens—gambling tables—and race courses—who are all for this life and its enjoyments, however unscriptural.

(4.) *Persons who are notoriously profane*—swearers, liars, sabbath-breakers, debauchees, semi-infidels—men of no principles or of bad ones, living in sin, enemies to God, and secret, if not open, persecutors of his people.

These, and such like, constitute the communicants at the Lord's Table in the state-church—the ungodly frequently forming the majority. Yet they are all received and treated alike, no difference being made between the unclean and the clean. This, in truth, is the *only* "Communion of Saints" known or practised, or indeed practicable, in the national church.

SECONDLY.—THE CAUSES OF SUCH COMMUNION.—

I. AS TO SUCH A CLERICAL COMMUNION OF SAINTS—*Blackwood*—in the citations previously given—fully and satisfactorily explains it. On entering the ministry no test of genuine godliness is applied—the same facilities being allowed to the unregenerate as to the godly. And though some of the bishops may be more particular as to learning and doctrine than others, scarcely any candidate for holy orders is baffled in his aim at the pulpit through want of a prelate to confer holy orders upon him.

II. SUCH A LAY COMMUNION IS ALSO EASILY ACCOUNTED FOR. And,

(1.) As a national church, supported by direct or indirect taxation, by every British subject, all have an equal LEGAL RIGHT to its ordinances—for, as *Hooker* remarks, all the members of the state are also equally members of the church.

(2.) As PRACTICAL MEMBERSHIP succeeds confirmation, and as the only prerequisites to confirmation are a competent age and ability to answer the questions of the church catechism; few persons, disposed to communicate, can be canonically prevented through want of due qualifications.

(3.) The Canon's declare that "every lay person is BOUND TO RECEIVE the Holy Communion thrice every year," (*Canon 22*;) that "the names and surnames of all the parishioners, as well men as women,

“which, being of the age of 16 years, receive not the communion at Easter before, are to be exhibited to the bishop or his chancellor within 40 days,” (*Canon 112*), “that they may be punished by the severity of the laws, according to their deserts.”—(*Canon 109*.)

(4.) Many, if not most, conformists entertain the notion that there is **SOMETHING MERITORIOUS**, if not saving, in taking the sacrament at the church; that it wipes out the score of their transgressions; and places them in a “state of salvation.” The frequent administration of the Lord’s Supper to the unconverted sick, dying, and condemned, fosters this notion, and induces the sinner to seek the altar for relief and consolation.

These reasons are amply sufficient to account for the medley fellowship of the national church—which contains nothing effectually to prevent it. The definition of a church, in the 19th Article—“a congregation of faithful men”—the warning of the 29th against being “partakers to their condemnation,”—and the admonition of the Rubric to “open and notorious evil livers,” are insufficient to prevent the practice previously exposed.

THIRD.—THE RESULTS OF SUCH COMMUNION.—

(1.) *It deludes and injures the souls of the ignorant and profane.*—As they are permitted and induced to take the highest position in the church, and are treated in all respects as the holiest disciples of Christ; they will naturally conclude that all must be right—and “eat and drink to their condemnation, not discerning the Lord’s body.”

(2.) *It greatly corrupts and disgraces the Church of England.*—It draws into the state pulpits and around the state altars persons who are destitute of piety and talents sufficient to give them a place among voluntary evangelical dissenters. It makes the church the open and ample receptacle of all the disaffected and worldly-minded children of nonconformity.

(3.) *It must greatly mortify and distress pious and enlightened episcopalians.*—To feel that they cannot kneel down at the table of the Lord—where saints only should appear—without being subject to associate most intimately and spiritually with swearers, liars, infidels, &c. must be an annoyance, which to a holy dissenter would be quite insufferable.

(4.) *It shows that a “communion of saints” is unknown in the national church.*—There may be saints in it; but they are associated with open and notorious sinners—their spiritual fellowship is with the enemies of the cross and of all righteousness—with people who outrage the laws of christianity in the week, and who would feel grossly scandalized if gravely designated “saints” by their worldly and wicked companions.

IN CONCLUSION: I feel no hesitation in saying, and, if called upon, in proving, by the most palpable and convincing evidence,—I. That as far as “The Communion of Saints” is concerned, the Church of England is either no Christian church at all, or the most corrupt and antichristian denomination of professing protestant evangelical people in the world.—and, II. That if pious people desire to unite themselves with those who practically maintain “The Communion of Saints,” as exemplified in the primitive apostolical churches, they must unite with the protestant evangelical non-conformists of this country.

THE PERNICIOUS INFLUENCE OF THE STATE CHURCH.

By the REV. W. THORN, Winchester.

IN tract 24, First Series, it is shown, that—considering the agency employed, the money expended, and the patronage enjoyed, by the Church of England,—it has been “A most Signal and Miserable Failure.” I now intend to prove that the Influence of the State-Church on its pastors and people is highly pernicious. For accomplishing this object it will be necessary first to make a few

PRELIMINARY REMARKS:—

(1.) By “The *Pernicious Influence* of the State Church,” is meant the unholy effects produced on the minds and manners of episcopalians by its laws, notions, and services; or, in other words, the taste, temper, spirit, and disposition, indirectly engendered by the constitution, working, doctrines, and rites, of the establishment.

(2.) It is not intended to attribute to the founders or adherents of the state religion a *deliberate design* to produce a pernicious influence on the mind of the minister or his charge. The whole has incidentally arisen from ignorance of human nature, a desire to dignify the priesthood, and a culpable disregard of the Holy Bible.

(3.) Nor is it designed to insinuate that *all the influence* of the national church is pernicious. It is “a fountain that sends forth at the same place “sweet water and bitter.” To adjust the comparative quantity of either would be difficult; but, where all should be pure, the admixture of the polluted current sadly vitiates the whole.

(4.) Neither are we to attribute to the Church, as a system, the vices and evils of *those who belong to it*, any farther than they are caused, or constitutionally connived at, by the church itself. Men may be worse or better than their creed—which therefore is not entitled to the honour or disgrace of what it is not clearly the cause.

(5.) The pernicious influence of the church *operates variously* on various persons. The intelligent will be affected differently from the ignorant—the sceptical from the credulous—the pious from the profane—and the clergy from the people. This will account for certain apparent discrepancies in our future remarks.

(6.) Different parts, principles, and operations, of the establishment are adapted to produce *dissimilar effects* in the same mind—some leading to priestcraft—and some to contempt of the priesthood—some to ambition—and some to popish superstition. Hence, also, the same person is differently influenced by the church at different times.

(7.) Many church ministers and people have sufficient intellect, piety, and firmness *to resist*, to a considerable degree, the pernicious influence of the state-church. This is cheerfully conceded—and that to the honour of the parties concerned. To be truly pious, charitable, and generous churchmen, requires an extraordinary measure of divine grace.

(8.) Such are the natural darkness, deadness, and depravity of unsanctified human nature, that every religious institution should be adapted *only and entirely to remove them*—consequently, a system that causes or encourages such evil dispositions and practices must be bad in the extreme, and deserving the severest condemnation. And such is the case with the national church—as I shall now concisely and plainly unfold. For confirmation the reader has only to observe what is passing around him.

FIRST.—ITS INFLUENCE ON THE CLERGY.—It is calculated, then,—

I. TO TEMPT UNSUITABLE CANDIDATES, *into the pulpit*.—As fully shown in the preceding paper, real piety, talents, orthodoxy, and Christian zeal, are not essential to procure holy orders, or the most eminent and lucrative offices, in the state-church. The door is thrown open to any one whose parents can pay or successfully solicit for a college education. Moreover, the profession is genteel—the labour light—and the wages often enormous. Hence the multitudes of incompetent state-pastors.

II. TO CHERISH A FEVERISH AND RESTLESS AMBITION, *in the priesthood*.—From the lengthened grades of the clergy—from the curate to the primate—the immense incomes some of the dignified ministers receive—the high-sounding honours they wear—and the vast relative powers they wield—and which any one, by “good luck,” or favouritism, may attain; it may be easily conceived that content in the humbler clergy must be exceedingly difficult and rare.

III. TO PRODUCE MUCH CLERICAL SERVILITY, *towards ecclesiastical patrons*.—Peers, prelates, gentlemen, ladies, and officers of state, having rich preferments at their free disposal, are sure to find numerous unbefitted parsons dancing attendance on them, stooping to almost any meanness, and professing almost any principles, in order to secure the higher posts, honours, and emoluments, of the hierarchy.

IV. TO EXCITE PASTORAL HAUGHTINESS, *towards their flocks*.—Being rendered totally independent of their people, and exacting their entire incomes from them by force of law; being imposed on the parish by lordly patrons, and not elected by the suffrages of their hearers; they feel that the smiles of the congregation can do them no good, and their frowns no evil. Hence the absurd hauteur they generally display.

V. TO FOSTER PERSONAL INDOLENCE, *in their parochial duties*.—Not being at all remunerated—like other professional gentlemen—according to the work performed, the approbation won, or the good effected; receiving the same pay whether doing much or little; and too seldom stimulated by higher motives; it is natural that their love of ease should be devoutly consulted—which is notoriously the case in most of the wealthier priesthood.

VI. TO PREVENT THEOLOGICAL ATTAINMENTS, *for ministerial efficiency*.—Three-fourths of all the clergy have to say, is printed and prepared to their hand. They have nothing to study in their addresses to God, nor in the various offices and sacraments of the church. All their sermons may be read, and, consequently, may be purchased at a trifling expence. Indeed, men may pass for able ministers in the state sanctuary with less theology than is mastered by thousands of Sabbath-school teachers.

VII. TO ENGENDER OFFICIAL CONCEIT, *as state-church divines*.—The bishops must feel inflated with the importance of their elevated rank; and inferior dignitaries with their relative greatness. The clergy, as a body, must be impressed with the virtues derived from their supposed apostolic ordination—their power to regenerate the baptized—to pardon the dying—and to give a sacred, if not a saving, efficacy to the word they preach and to the elements they administer.

VIII. TO ENCOURAGE SECTARIAN HATRED, *against nonconformists*.—The persecuting canons and creeds they subscribe; their claims to instruct and govern the whole population; the toryism natural to their position; and the impatience of opposition incident to their order; are all calculated to induce the greatest enmity against those who erect rival places of worship, diminish the influence, and thin the flocks, of the parish priest.

IX. TO STIFLE THE VOICE OF CONSCIENCE, *in enlightened pastors*.—On entering college, in matriculating, and in ordination, they subscribe to statutes, articles, and rubrics, most of which they never read, do not believe, and seldom scrupulously observe. Besides this, they are constantly saying and doing what they feel, and often admit, to be erroneous, and injurious to the souls of men. With them the system is one of contest between principle and interest—and their chief skill lies in managing their conviction.

Such, in short, is the influence the church exercises over the clergy—and such are the pernicious effects it too commonly produces on their minds—many of them naturally the most virtuous, honest, and benevolent!

SECOND.—ITS INFLUENCE ON THE PEOPLE.—It is calculated to produce,—

I. *In some, a sheer contempt for the clerical character*.—The worldly and grasping spirit many of the state pastors evince; the spirit of persecution they often manifest; the little ability most of them possess; their frequent opposition to the people's good; and the priestly airs they occasionally assume; render them despicable in the eyes even of their own people.

II. *In others, a superstitious veneration for the clergy*.—The church invests them with apostolical prerogatives; “whose sins they remit are to be remitted” in heaven! They only can transform little children into good Christians! they only are duly qualified to marry the young, administer the Lord's supper, church women, or inter the dead! They are all true apostolical men; and whatever be their moral character, talents, or uselessness, they must be almost divinely adored for the sake of their holy office!

III. *In others, hatred of the Christian religion*.—Identifying the doctrines of Christ with the notions of the state system; and supposing the

latter a true counterpart of the former; they naturally conclude that a scheme so sanguinary, superstitious, and contradictory, and many of whose sanctioned ministers are so grasping, ambitious, indolent, presuming, and inconsistent, cannot have come from the God of truth and holiness.

IV. *In others, a very low estimate of the Holy Scriptures.*—Finding the Apocryphal books read in divine service, and parts of the Bible omitted; the Prayer Book, canons, and homilies, extolled to the heavens, and appealed to on all occasions, as the chief or only test of truth and duty, and as containing the statute-laws of the church; they are led to regard their Bibles as of secondary, if not of very inferior and equivocal, authority.

V. *In most, a scrupulous attention to religious trifles.*—The precise posture of the body, looking towards the east, bowing, courtseying, sitting, and rising at the right moment, nicely chiming in with the clerk, properly crossing the baptized, sacredly observing certain popish festivals, abstaining from various kinds of food on canonical days; these and similar trifles are regarded as valid and prime indications of genuine churchmanship.

VI. *In many, great indifference to personal godliness.*—They can be religious by proxy, or by passively submitting to the magic operations of the prelatically consecrated clergy. They were regenerated by the Holy Spirit at the font; were confirmed, and have the favour of God; and shall undoubtedly be sent to heaven when they die; without giving themselves any serious trouble concerning their personal piety or practical holiness.

VII. *In others, inattention to the concerns of the church.*—Being obliged to receive and pay the minister sent them; unable to rectify any manifest error or inconsistency in their pastor or sect; being mere ciphers in the management of spiritual affairs; they act in character, and seldom take any very lively interest in what is doing—leaving it to the pastor to be both head and tail in all such transactions.

VIII. *In others, a dread of all religious Reformation.*—They are taught to love the good old ways! and to shun those persons that are given to change. Things have gone on very well hitherto; they satisfied our respected sires, and are good enough for their children! All is right and perfect—cannot be improved by modern novices—and must be let alone! They would deplore any meddling with the Prayer Book, articles, tithes, &c. much more than mutilating the word of God!

IX. *In others, the most supercilious airs towards dissenters.*—Like their teachers, and in harmony with their creeds, they believe themselves standing on infinitely higher and holier ground than Methodists, Baptists, and Independents. They belong to the true Protestant Church—the glory and bulwark of the truth in Europe! And whenever they can safely evince their contempt and dislike of dissenters, and punish them for their assumed false doctrines, heresies, and schisms, they seldom fail to do it.

I must now conclude by simply remarking—That the Pernicious Influence of the State-church is visible in many ways not here specified;—that to belong to it is to be placed under a most blighting and baneful power;—that the above or similar charges made against it will not apply to any system of evangelical dissent in the kingdom;—and that Nonconformists have to be very thankful to God for preserving them from such an unholy influence as the state-church sheds over its pastors and people.

THE EVILS OF CHURCH EXTENSION BY NATIONAL TAXATION.

A LETTER TO SIR ROBERT INGLIS, BART. M.P.

By the REV. W. THORN, Winchester.

SIR,

You are reported, and no doubt correctly, to have recently made the following declaration in the House of Commons:—"FOR MYSELF I WILL NEVER CONSENT "TO PAY A SIXPENCE FOR TEACHING AS THE WORD OF GOD WHAT I BELIEVE "TO BE CONTRARY TO THAT WORD."

Combining with this assertion our Lord's golden rule of equity, which you doubtless professedly adopt as your own—"ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER YE WOULD THAT "MEN SHOULD DO TO YOU, DO YE EVEN SO TO THEM"—it might have been presumed that you would never attempt to compel any man "to pay a sixpence for teaching as the word of God what HE believes to be contrary to that word."

Yet strange to say, you are the leading parliamentary advocate of a scheme for erecting a large number of new churches at the public expense; and for compelling all dissenters, to contribute indirectly, at least, towards propagating "as the word "of God what they believe and know to be contrary to that word."

To account for this glaring inconsistency various conjectures might be offered. But I will mention only one—involving more mental than moral obliquity:—You possibly imagine that there is nothing taught in the Church of England contrary to God's word; and that all protestant dissenters,—notwithstanding the expence of their nonconformity—really view your whole system as perfectly unobjectionable!

Allow me, then, to assure you that all intelligent dissenters, regard your establishment, within and without, from turret to base, as contrary to God's word; and consider it an act of robbery and persecution to be compelled, by law or otherwise, to pay directly or indirectly even a sixpence towards its extension or support.

To put you and your party in possession of their views of the law-church, and of your plan for enlarging its operations, I shall enumerate a few of—

FIRST.—THE EVILS WHICH YOUR MEASURES INVOLVE.—You are, then, for enlarging the sphere and workings of the state-religion in its present condition—with all its grievous errors and unscriptural ceremonies—and, thereby, in the judgment of every genuine dissenter, increasing the fearful and extensive mischief it has from the first been effecting.

I. *You are for erecting a number of additional places*,—from which more Puseyite, Heterodox, Unconverted, and Immoral ministers may diffuse their popish, erroneous, and mischievous sentiments; and in which it is probable the existing relative proportion of good and bad clergymen—(now greatly in favour of the latter)—will be regularly and constantly preserved; and of course more error than truth be promulgated by them.

II. *You are for increasing the unscriptural system of patronage*,—by affording bishops, private gentlemen, ladies, and officers of state, (few of whom profess to be "*saints*,") more opportunities of arbitrarily imposing on the people pastors they may greatly dislike; and of preventing their electing, after the primitive mode, such as they might cordially approve.

III. *You are for extending the unholy alliance of church and state*,—by which the religion, ministers, and disciples of Christ are laid prostrate at the feet of a political domination; which renders the clergy mere agents and tools of government; and by which the supreme and entire head-ship of the Saviour is practically transferred to the civil power.

IV. *You are for enlarging the application of your ecclesiastical laws*—the penal canons, rubrics, and statutes of your uncharitable and persecuting church—creating more ruthless agents for their execution, and bringing them to bear more specifically on the population, in order to satiate, if possible, the enormous voracity of your vengeful system.

V. *You are for multiplying the use of your popish liturgy*,—by compelling more preachers to read your humanly-composed forms of prayer—many of which are superstitious, unscriptural, and little less than blasphemous; and to adopt a method of addressing the Deity the reverse of that invariably practised in the primitive communions.

VI. *You are for heightening the hauteur of the state clergy*,—by increasing their already overgrown numbers and influence, from the ranks of unportioned tory youths, and thereby fomenting fresh disputes and angry contentions between them and their people respecting tithes, rates, dues, and the like,—to the greater disgrace of the cause you professedly aim to honour and promote.

VII. *Your plan would extend many other fearful evils*,—which I have barely space to mention, and can scarcely find terms sufficiently strong rightly to characterize:—

1. The shocking and soul-destroying doctrine of BAPTISMAL REGENERATION.
2. The lying and wholesale perjury of BAPTISMAL SPONSORS.
3. The teaching of your heterodox and mischievous CHURCH CATECHISM.
4. The popish and pernicious doctrine of PRIESTLY ABSOLUTION.
5. The humanly invented and injurious rite of JUVENILE CONFIRMATION.
6. Your grossly indecent and ridiculous MARRIAGE CEREMONY.
7. The impious rites and assumptions of PRELITICAL ORDINATION.
8. The damnable clauses of your INEXPLICABLE CREEDS.
9. The almost blasphemous service for “KING CHARLES, the martyr!”
10. The soul-deluding and God-insulting BURIAL SERVICE:—

With all your other enforced popish and unscriptural notions and ceremonies—as *consecrating* buildings and grave yards—*kneeling* at the Lord's Supper—*crossing* in baptism—reading the *Apocryphal* books instead of *the Bible*, &c. too many to mention here—but which have been expounded in preceding papers—the terms, statements, and deductions, of which I am prepared to justify against all the learning and genius of your Oxford constituents. Can you then wonder at the opposition of pious and enlightened dissenters to your antichristian and mischievous measures?

SECONDLY.—YOUR UNRIGHTEOUS AND IMPOLITIC PLANS.—Were your ultimate aim perfectly unobjectionable, your mode of accomplishing it is worthy of universal condemnation. You assume to be actuated by christian motives; and yet are adopting worldly, heathenish, and wicked means, for attaining your object.—But before specifically characterizing your scheme, allow me to ask you two or three questions:

1. In estimating the supposed want of religious accommodation, have you taken

into account the 10,000 meeting houses and 20,000 certified rooms in which divine worship is regularly PERFORMED BY DISSENTERS, to not less than 5,000,000 of the people? Or are they left out of your calculations, as is generally done by your high-church fraternity?

2. If a number of new erections be really requisite for conformists, in certain localities, is there not a still larger number of SUPERFLUOUS CHURCHES, with ample revenues, in other parts of the country? Might not, at least, 1000 be found so near to each other, and with so few attendants in each, as to be next to useless? And might not these be taken down and their revenues applied to building and endowing others where deemed necessary?

3. Or might not the VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLE, frequently adopted by your own party—which boasts of possessing nearly all the wealth in the nation—be so carried out; or the ENORMOUS REVENUES of your dignified and beneficed clergy be so INCOME-TAXED; as to procure all the funds requisite for extending the church of England, to your hearts content?—A few words now on the impolicy and impiety of your proposal:—

I. YOUR SCHEME IS SECTARIAN.—You are not for extending the christian religion simply, but the dogmas of a sect, and the aggrandizement of a party—and that one of the smallest in christendom. This you are for doing, not in the capacity of a private member of that sect, but as a legislator, acting professedly for the whole nation; and you are for getting the money, not from your own party only, but equally out of the pockets of people of all persuasions—and by the coercion of the sword.

II. YOUR SCHEME IS INEQUITABLE.—You and your party are for compelling others to do for you what you would deem it sinful in them to enforce on yourselves. *You and they* cannot conscientiously give a *sixpence* to aid in erecting dissenting chapels—in which nothing anti-scriptural is inculcated—and yet you are for obliging the conscientious *dissenter* to pay *pounds* towards building episcopalian meeting houses—in which he could not worship without sinning against God and his own religious convictions!

III. YOUR SCHEME IS IMPOLITIC.—The expensive state-church—(three-fourths of whose meeting-houses are not half filled)—is already regarded with great and growing jealousy and dislike, not only by dissenters but by vast multitudes of nominal conformists. To vote more money from the public exchequer for its extension would but increase their hatred against the state for making the grants, as much as against the clergy who would eventually receive them. And the result of such a general feeling might ultimately be most disastrous to the peace of the nation.

IV. YOUR SCHEME IS PERNICIOUS.—You may plead that you are for extending all that is good in the church. But you would inevitably extend all its evils in an equal ratio; and more so than sufficient to neutralize all its benefits—since evil, in this corrupt world, is much more influential than good. Would you give ample circulation to a book which you believed taught 1000 glorious truths and 500 or even 50 shocking falsehoods? And is your system any thing better?

V. YOUR SCHEME IS SUSPICIOUS.—You and your party do not openly profess it to be the leading object of your church extension

project, to oppose and if possible to destroy dissent. But when we find multitudes of episcopalians much more adverse to the most holy and evangelical dissent than to the grossest immorality; it is difficult to divest one's mind of the supposition. And you are for so taxing nonconformists, that with their own hard-earned property you may destroy what they have spent millions of money and rivers of blood in establishing!

VI. YOUR SCHEME IS OPPRESSIVE.—You are for taking large sums of money from the already famishing poor to erect costly churches—which few of them would ever enter. You are for taxing the necessities of life to the most wretched, in order to effect your sectarian and pernicious object, without putting your hand deeply into the pockets of the rich, or diminishing the revenues of your over-paid priesthood. All the grants of parliament for building new churches must, as you well know, be raised from the dearer bread, tea, meat, clothes, &c. of the consumer—millions of whom are already in a state of almost starvation.

VII. YOUR SCHEME IS PERSECUTING.—Dissenters have to sustain their own religious institutions at an outlay of probably not less than £2,000,000 a year; and they are compelled to contribute already *a still larger annual sum* towards supporting your religion, which they view as popish and antichristian. And yet you are for pilfering them, by act of parliament, to the tune of many thousands a year more; and to make them support and propagate, *by proxy*, doctrines they regard as dishonourable to God, delusive to the souls of men, and which they are doing all in their power to counteract! If this be not grievous persecution, there is no such thing under the sun; nor would there be any in compelling you to pay a 100 a year towards supporting a Socinian minister, or to fee some popish tutor in the college of Maynooth, for propagating their respective principles.

Assuming these reasonings to be correct, it follows that the PRESERVATION OF THE LAW-CHURCH ON ITS EXISTING SCALE OR EVEN AT ALL must involve its members and defenders at large in no ordinary guilt. In your system the Saviour's sovereignty in his kingdom is actually usurped by a political government—the supreme authority of the bible is destroyed by practically elevating the antichristian standards of your church above it—the simple, beautiful, and efficient services of the apostolical churches are superceded by a number of puerile, popish, and superstitious ceremonies—the rights and prerogatives granted to the saints universally, by the great charter of christianity, are rudely invaded and taken from them—and no pious and intelligent christian can live in the country without directly or indirectly paying towards upholding your sect, though he should regard it as dishonourable to God and adverse to the spiritual welfare of mankind. Instead, therefore, of labouring to extend this great national error and evil, at the public expense, it is your bounden duty, as a professed Christian, to unite with all enlightened nonconformists TO REMOVE IT ALTOGETHER, or, in other words, to bring it back to the standard of the New Testament faith, order, mode of support, and means of worship—and in neglecting to do so, you and all such like episcopalians, will surely incur the high displeasure of that God whom you profess to love, reverence, and obey.

For further exposition I have no room—I can only say, in conclusion, that your plan, in every point of view, is decidedly objectionable—and that those who carry it into effect will be regarded as robbers, and persecutors—equally with Bonner and Laud—and as such will be recorded in the impartial annals of the Christian church.

PIOUS MINISTERS IN THE CHURCH NO ARGUMENT FOR ATTENDING IT.

By the Rev. W. THORN, Winchester.

VARIOUS are the motives which induce the mass of conformists to attend the Parish Church in preference to the Dissenting Chapel. But episcopalians may be challenged to mention even one genuine scriptural argument in support of their choice and practice. SEE No. 18, FIRST SERIES.

But I intend now to deal with a particular class of conformists, who—sincerely or not—assign as their reason for attending the state-church, in various localities, that the ministers they hear are pious and evangelical men. This circumstance they regard as an ample justification of their conduct.

“Our minister,” say they, “is such a nice man, so pious, so humble, so kind, and so much of a gentleman! His sermons are beautiful, plain, impressive, full of gospel truth, and delivered without reading a word! He also pays uncommon attention to the young, the poor, the sick, and the dying! Indeed, he is such an excellent clergyman, that it would be wicked to say a word against him, and a great loss not to attend his ministry! And as for his lady, she is a charming creature, and always employed in benefitting her neighbours!”

Admitting the facts of this representation, I contend that the pulpit talents, personal piety, and pastoral attentions, of such a state clergyman, even with the virtues of his amiable wife to boot, afford no just or sufficient reasons for attending his services in the Church of England. And I will now adduce a few arguments in support of this conviction:—

I. *If personal piety, pulpit talents, and pastoral attentions be, of themselves, valid inducements for attending a particular ministry; it does not necessarily follow that one must go to the parish church to enjoy them.*

(1.) It will not be denied, by any intelligent and candid person, that evangelical dissenting preachers of different denominations, thickly located in the kingdom, (and who would be far more numerous still but for the opposition of the high-church party), are, in all personal, pastoral, and ministerial qualifications, and usefulness, *on a par, at least, with the best of the state clergy*. Nor will he assert that the existence of a pious minister in a parish, abstractedly considered, presents a stronger motive for going to church, than the existence of an equally pious and efficient dissenting minister in a town does for attending his chapel.

(2.) Ignorant, interested, and prejudiced episcopalians—accustomed to magnify the virtues, labours, and charities, of the church parson, and in the like degree to depreciate those of the dissenting preacher—who view the same truths spoken by the former *as much more true and better* than when spoken by the latter; and who foolishly fancy some marvellous benefits flowing from prelatical ordination, and the patronage of the state—will, of course, arrive at a different conclusion. But to such partial, superstitious, and incompetent umpires, the decision of the question is not

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submitted. To the wise and honest the appeal is made, and by their verdict I am content to abide.

II. *To attend the Church of England, through mere respect or affection for the officiating clergymen, is to adopt a most unwise, unscriptural, and dangerous, principle of religious profession.*

(1.) Such a motive for uniting *with any christian persuasion*, is destitute of all due respect for that divine revelation, which it is the duty of every one to examine for himself, and which should be his exclusive guide in every spiritual matter. It involves an evil almost universally deprecated—the *indiscriminate adoption of the errors as well as the verities of an INDIVIDUAL, through attachment to his person*. In the *present* case, it also assumes that a certain number of vices may be tolerated, provided they are found in connexion with, it may be, an equal number of virtues,—than which nothing can be more unscriptural and wicked. And it is so “having men’s persons in admiration,” as blindly and criminally to surrender one’s judgment to the sole direction of the clergy—by which practice a priestcraft has been fostered that has enslaved and cursed the churches of Christendom for the last fifteen or sixteen hundred years.

(2.) Again, as there are few religious denominations—however various or conflicting their creeds, constitutions, and ceremonies—which do not contain ministers as pious, talented, zealous, humble, and benevolent as any to be found in the state communion; it follows, that persons who attend the established church, *through mere attachment to the preacher*, might, for the very same reason, attend a popish chapel,—there being many pious, kind, diligent, and charitable catholic priests in the country. And here we discover the secret of that success which often attends many a heterodox cause. Its leading advocates being virtuous, amiable, and generous persons; are blindly followed by others who study religion in the conduct of men, and not in the pages of inspiration.

(3.) Besides, if the churchman’s reasoning were good, when applied to a religious profession, it would be *equally valid in every analogous case*. Men, whose piety few call in question, are found among *ultra tories*, advocating measures palpably adverse to the prosperity of the middle and poorer classes of society; others of equal godliness are the *apologists of slavery*; and others, are engaged in various pursuits which most good people condemn. Are we, therefore, to approve of their ways, and to unite in their proceedings, because they are pious and otherwise amiable men! To reply in the affirmative would betray an entire destitution of all Christian principle.

III. *Every pious and scripturally enlightened clergyman officially sanctions and propagates numerous errors and evils of the most antichristian character, and that too while conscious of their real nature and most dangerous effects.*

This statement may appear harsh and uncharitable; but it is borne out by the repeated admissions of many of the best ministers the church has ever enjoyed; and I am prepared to justify it entire against all the force episcopalians can bring to shake its validity. I do not unchristianize such a clergyman, nor pronounce him an *arrant*

hypocrite, nor exclude him from the ranks of the saved;—on these points the reader must form his own judgment.

(1.) But I do aver that the minister of a church—which is under the absolute controul of the state—who receives his support from coercive taxation—and labours among a people on whom he has been arbitrarily imposed—*is in a false and dangerous position*; and also that the clergyman who uses the baptismal service of the church, teaches its catechism, reads its absolution service, brings the young to confirmation, and canonically officiates at the grave of the dead—to say nothing of numerous other errors and evils of the system—*manifestly sanctions and propagates the most delusive and deadly sentiments*—and all this is done by the most pious equally as by the most profane minister of the church.

(2.) Further, if, as assumed, the said minister be truly conversant with the revealed will of God; *he must be doing all this with the consciousness that he has no divine warrant for it*; and, in opposition to the plainest dictates of scripture, must be knowingly periling the piety and safety of the people among whom he labours—thereby displaying a criminal inconsistency which the thoughtless and unenlightened clergyman never exhibits. Nor is there a false doctrine, a popish rite, or a pernicious ceremony in his corrupt system *which*, when assailed, *he does not defend and applaud* with as much zeal, as the most heterodox parson of his communion.

(3.) He may call Christ his master, but he actually obeys the unrighteous ordinances of erring men; he may laud the Bible, but he keeps the commandments of his heterodox prayer-book—and he does all this without any physical compulsion—and simply for the sake of a respectable post, an easy employment, and, if he can get it, a good salary. And however incompatible *the union of clerical piety and priestly persecution* may appear to simple minded Christians, it is unhappily seen in numerous instances, and in many immediately around us. There are comparatively few gentlemen passing for pious ministers of the state-church who do not systematically and unrighteously labour to traduce and injure dissenting ministers, and, whenever practicable with safety, punish and *persecute the nonconforming population* around them. Indeed, the general and justly formed opinion of most of these clerical officials is, that they are far more narrow-minded, supercilious, and intolerant than the majority of their colleagues, not honoured with the title of “Pious Ministers.” Nor are their persecuting operations less iniquitous and annoying because they are frequently carried on in a *sly, underhand, from house-to-house, canting, and courteous manner*, peculiar to themselves and their obsequious evangelical emisaries.

(4.) It, therefore, follows that to attend the state-church, *through regard for such a minister*, is to betray a fearful lack of scriptural information, and Christian integrity, or the baneful domination of some unconquerable prejudice. It is to sanction and support a man *who officially does much more mischief than all his personal piety, pulpit talents, and pastoral assiduities can ever counteract or compensate*;—and who, as previously stated, is generally the most sectarian and bigotted of all his reverend brotherhood.

In fact, it is encouraging a person, whose very piety renders his clerical services far more pernicious than those of an unconverted and immoral minister. The weight of his character gives a plausible sanction to all he says and performs, and causes his unsuspecting and ill-informed admirers to receive the whole implicitly—concluding that so wise and worthy a man, in holy orders, apostolically ordained, and recognized by the state, could never propagate any thing contrary to truth and righteousness!

IV. *No person can attend the ministry of a pious state clergyman without sanctioning and practically supporting all the errors and evils, which the Church of England unquestionably contains.*

(1.) As the pious minister cannot officiate in the national sanctuary without countenancing and diffusing the most heterodox and dangerous doctrines—(for, in common with the ungodly parson, he can soften, alter, or omit nothing, however repugnant to his views and feelings)—*so his hearers cannot be present without virtually saying AMEN to every one of them.* Whatever be their mental reservations, or their real disapprobation of many things he officially says and does, their customary presence at church is an ostensible and unequivocal sanction not only of the man but of all his clerical operations.

(2.) Their attendance at church also necessarily expresses *a cordial concurrence in the hierarchy as a whole.* While filling their pews in the parish sanctuary, they cannot specifically avow their approval of what they deem scriptural, and their dislike of what they regard as contrary to it. No practical conformist can be identified with only a part of the church, or be a member of half its communion. Hence, were the priest ten times as pious as he really is, the regular attendant makes all its errors and evils his own, and incurs all the criminality such an adoption necessarily involves.

(3.) Moreover, as the persons particularly addressed in this argument are the serious members of the law-church, they must be informed that their *conduct gives an unrighteous example to less devout and discriminating persons*—leading them to a wholesale and cordial reception of all the antichristian doctrines, and superstitious rites of the system. They are doing all they practically can to perpetuate the evils they secretly condemn; and are almost treacherously bringing into the church a class of beings who will blindly support a cause which, in numerous leading and important matters, is admitted to be at direct variance with the positive and explicitly revealed will of God; and which is in no degree improved by the presence of a pious minister, either in the pulpit or the desk.

Upon the whole, it may be safely concluded that the existence of a pious clergyman in the church of England affords no fair or even feasible reason or excuse for attending it. Those who, after carefully reading this paper, shall offer such a plea for conformity, may be safely considered AS ACTING UNDER SOME MORE POTENT AND LESS RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE—which, in all probability, would take them thither, though the parson were much less pious, and the system much more corrupt, than they actually are.

Happy is it for Evangelical Dissenters that they possess a pious, talented, and industrious ministry; and that they can attend their respective places of worship WITHOUT COUNTEINANCING HERESY IN THEIR TEACHERS OR SUPERSTITIOUS AND DANGEROUS RITES IN RELIGIOUS SERVICES,—as all conformists are compelled to do. Let them be thankful for their privileges, and diligently improve them, to the honour of God and the advantage of their own eternal interests!

Warren, Typ. Winton.

COTTAGE QUESTIONS FOR CLERICAL VISITORS.

By the REV. W. THORN, Winchester.

THE zealous, active, and sectarian parish clergyman is in the habit of frequently calling on the humbler classes of Protestant Dissenters, for the purpose of expatiating on the evils of nonconformity, and to enforce the necessity of their always and only attending the parish church.

He pronounces dissent to be needless, schismatical, wicked, and even "worse than drunkenness!"—asserts that dissenting ministers are an illiterate and low-bred body of men, obtruders into the sacred office of religious instructors, and every way unqualified to preach the gospel, or dispense the Christian sacraments! And he boldly avers that the worshippers in the meeting-house are all sadly deluded, and "in danger of the judgment!"

On the other hand, he extols the state-system as pure and perfect!—its clergy are all apostolically ordained, and fully authorised to administer the word and ordinances of the gospel!—its doctrines are all divine!—its prayers beautiful!—its spirit pre-eminently charitable!—all its rites, regulations, and ceremonies truly scriptural and instructive!—and, in a word, the whole charmingly consistent with the letter and spirit of divine revelation!—being "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing."

Whether his reverence really believes his own representations or not, is immaterial to our present purpose. He generally exhibits great shyness when pressed for facts and proofs of his assertions: while his ghostly importance, is highly offended at any objections and interrogations from his domestic audience. Indeed, he seldom formally attacks dissent, or even ventures specifically to defend his own system, unless before persons on whose partiality, ignorance, or credulity, he thinks he may safely rely. Probably he is secretly aware of being unable to bring any serious charge against evangelical nonconformity, WHICH WILL NOT EQUALLY TELL AGAINST THE APOSTOLICAL CHURCHES OF PRIMITIVE TIMES. The effect of his declamations on the minds of his hearers will, of course, greatly depend on their previous acquaintance with the word of God, the merits of dissent, and the evils of the national church.

Supposing, however, that many humble and pious dissenters may require a little assistance in order to deal with this high-church intruder, and fairly to TURN THE TABLES UPON HIS REVERENCE; I purpose to set down a number of plain, pertinent, and important questions, to be proposed to him whenever he makes his pastoral visit to the dissenting cottage. To these, direct and explicit answers should be resolutely demanded; and till such be given, to the satisfaction and conviction of the good people of the house, he should be allowed to advance nothing further against dissent. Let him first pull the beam out of his own eye, before attempting to extract the imaginary mote from that of his brother's.

QUESTIONS TO BE PROPOSED TO THE VISITING CLERGYMAN:

1. QUEST.—Pray, Sir, how came you to be the minister of this parish? *Where you scripturally chosen by the people?*—or did you purchase the living?—or was it given you by some wealthy patron?—or are you simply the working agent of some gentleman parson?

2. QUEST.—On what scriptural authority do you include ME among your charge, or *pay me a pastoral visit*; well knowing that I belong to

another communion—have a pastor of my own faith and choice—and never recognized you as my religious instructor?

3. QUEST.—As you claim an official superiority to the wisest and holiest dissenting ministers, because you were *ordained by a lord-bishop*; can you tell me what personal, intellectual, spiritual, or official virtues and qualifications you received from the reverend prelate?

4. QUEST.—You gravely assume, and openly assert, that more benefits attend your clerical labours than follow those of Dissenting preachers; pray, *of what do they consist*—in more real conversions to God, or in the greater holiness of your converts?

5. QUEST.—You designate the state-religion, “our holy, pure, and apostolical church, and the only one in this country;” will you prove that the *first Christian Societies* were instituted, composed, governed, supported, and defended, like your state-endowed episcopacy?

6. QUEST.—You believe that the civil government has a right to model and manage the religion of its subjects; *can you establish this position from scripture*; and in the day of judgment will the civil power only be answerable for the heresies of its people?

7. QUEST.—You believe that “the church hath power to decree rites and ceremonies, and authority in controversies of faith;” then, first, *what do you mean by “the church?”* since the state alone legislates for you in such matters; and secondly, who gave any church this arbitrary power?

8. QUEST.—You also “believe in the communion of saints;” but is *your creed in accordance with your invariable practice?*—and are not your communicants at the Lord’s table chiefly composed of people known to be total strangers to almost every saintly qualification?

9. QUEST.—*What divine authority* have you for archbishops, lord-bishops, deans, chancellors, prebendaries, archdeacons, rectors, vicars, &c. with corresponding powers, duties, and incomes—the least useful being generally the best paid? Did God forget to name or appoint them?

10. QUEST.—Upon what portions of the New Testament do you found your *cathedral institutions*, with all their officers, popish ceremonies, and enormous wealth?—of what adequate service are they in the country?—and, *if* really important and useful, were not their founders wiser than God?

11. QUEST.—*Your bishops sit in the house of lords*, legislating in secular matters like temporal barons; can you give any divine precept or precedent for this practice;—or is that part of the New Testament lost in which it is written they were to be thus dignified and appointed?

12. QUEST.—What scriptural authority have you for *dividing the whole country* into bishoprics, archdeaconries, and parishes, and confining the labours of your ministers to these, in many cases, enormously large, but more frequently exceedingly limited, districts?

13. QUEST.—You have a multitude of *spiritual courts*, in which you try and punish men in soul, body, and estate, for ecclesiastical offences; and very often for obeying the good word of God, rather than the bad laws of men;—pray, did Christ or his apostles institute these courts?

14. QUEST.—Among other obnoxious rules, you have subscribed the first twelve canons of your church, in which *every person*, however pious and intelligent, not of your sect, is unmercifully condemned;—is yours, therefore, *a modest and charitable system?*

15. QUEST.—As all the state-clergy sign specific creeds, canons, and laws, for the express purpose of preventing diversity of judgment in sacred matters; how does it happen that they avowedly preach *every kind of opposing faith*, and are constantly writing and warring against each other?

16. QUEST.—Is not your clerical conduct *officially* guided by human laws, and not by God's word, and would you not be *tried by* your popish canons *instead of the inspired writings*, should you do any thing regarded as unbecoming a Christian minister?

17. QUEST.—You piously and devoutly call Jesus Christ your Lord and master, and the supreme Head of your church;—but *is he so practically?*—are not the civil powers of the nation your chief master?—and do you not obey them before, and often instead of, the Saviour?

18. QUEST.—As you are not a Jewish priest, in the land of Canaan, what right have you to *tithes*?—and, as a Christian teacher, how can you evangelically *compel*, at the point of the sword, *people of all sects and parties* to pay your salary, church-rates, or Easter dues?

19. QUEST.—You say this is done by the state, and not by the church; but do you not *cheerfully receive support* thus unscripturally obtained?—are you not virtually and, religiously speaking, the receiver of stolen goods?—and are you not living upon property obtained by “violence and fraud?”

20. QUEST.—You call yours “The poor man's church.” Pray, Sir, is it because the poor chiefly have to pay all its expences, *in the higher price* of all they and their families consume; and by which thousands are distressed and reduced to a work-house?

21. QUEST.—What divine authority have you for *bowing* at the word Jesus and not at that of Christ or Jehovah!—for keeping a number of *feast, fast, or saints' days*!—for repeating the Lord's prayer *four or five times* in a service!—and for reading the *Apocrypha* instead of the Bible?

22. QUEST.—Why *must* you make the *sign of the cross* in baptism!—or build your churches and bury your dead *due east and west*!—or make people *kneel* at the Lord's table!—or prelatically *consecrate* your religious edifices and grave yards before they can be used?

23. QUEST.—As you are compelled publicly to read the same humanly-composed forms of prayer all the year round—and always observe the same modes and ceremonies in your worship; *can you give any scriptural argument* for submitting to such benumbing restrictions?

24. QUEST.—Does it not seem strange even to you, Sir, that the clergyman, whatever be his abilities, character, conduct, or personal belief, should be entrusted with the power to make and *read his own sermons*, and yet *not to compose his own prayers*?

25. QUEST.—As you are not a very old man, how do you manage to preserve your clerical gravity while reading, to a virtuous and modest

young couple, your *Indecent Marriage Service*—or do you skip certain parts of it as really *too bad* to be repeated?

26. QUEST.—Whenever you christen children or adults, you declare before God and the people—that they *are all there and then regenerated* by the Holy Ghost, pardoned, justified and rendered safe for heaven; what divine authority have you for this?

27. QUEST.—How can you, for any consideration, *compel sponsors to vow and promise* to do for the child what you know to be impossible; and by which they must inevitably perjure their own souls? Indeed, what scriptural warrant have you for such vows or sponsors at all?

28. QUEST.—Again, Sir, with what good conscience can you teach, or cause to be taught to, children your *church catechism*, containing the grossest falsehoods and most antichristian doctrines; as admitted by many avowedly of the wisest and best ministers even of your own party?

29. QUEST.—When you visit the sick and dying and read, as in duty bound, the appointed church service, *you absolve or pardon the sins* of the patient, even in stronger language than is used by catholic priests; are you sure, then that you *really* have “power on earth to forgive sin?”

30. QUEST.—As in all your services you treat saints and sinners precisely alike—*so in burying the dead*, you bless God for taking the worst man as well as the best to heaven. Are you warranted by scripture to do this—and is your conscience quite at ease about it?

The person who has fully examined the character of the endowed religion—or even cursorily read my foregoing tracts on its “Errors and Evils;” will readily perceive that these questions might be considerably increased. But you have enough for your clerical visitor! And should he fail to answer them to the satisfaction of an intelligent bible christian—as he certainly will—you may feel assured that his church is totally indefensible, and that he is the minister of error and antichristian ceremonies—is not to be heard while assailing dissent, (which is entirely free from the above or similar corruptions)—nor followed to the scenes of so much superstition and erroneous sentiment.

There is, however, another class of clergymen who frequently visit dissenters and TALK AWAY MOST CHARITABLY AND RELIGIOUSLY, but whose sole object, in such calls, is to make converts to the establishment. Now it might not be amiss to ask them also a few of the preceding questions. For, with all their professions of kindness and piety, they are determined enemies of dissenters, and secretly labour to traduce and injure them on all fitting occasions. Their design in such pastoral visits is the same as that of their more open and honest brother; only they go more cautiously and cunningly to work in order to effect their purpose.

The above questions, with very little modification, might likewise be proposed to CERTAIN HIGH CHURCH GENTLEMEN AND LADIES, who visit or assail the humble dissenter, and with bribes, threats and jesuitical arguments, urge him to attend the parish sanctuary, or to send his children to a national or church sabbath-school. Let him make it a condition of compliance with their unreasonable requests that they first fairly answer all the objections to their system implied in the above interrogations.

Finally, THE INQUIRING EPISCOPALIAN would do well to propose the said questions to the parish priest or his visiting agents. He would then gather, from their inability to ANSWER EVEN ONE OF THEM SCRIPTURALLY, that the state-religion is not the evangelical, amiable, or useful institution he had long regarded it; and that it is through want of examination and comparing it with God's word, that so many well-meaning persons adhere to it with so much fondness and tenacity.

THE STATE CHURCH

THE CHIEF CAUSE OF NATIONAL DISCORD.

By the Rev. W. THORN, Winchester.

THAT our country presents a troubled and conflicting aspect, and that a spirit of discord and strife is abroad among us, no person acquainted with its features and feelings will deny. Various causes might be assigned as ministering to this infelicitous state of society; and different parties would naturally fix on those least calculated to criminate their own principles and procedure. But I have no hesitation in asserting that the most prolific source of all our national discord is the state-religion.

(1.) AS TO THE FACT OF DISSENTION.—Our population are at strife and war with each other in almost every town and village of the country. The nearest neighbours and, occasionally, the nearest relatives, stand aloof from each other, or meet only for debate. The tongue and the pen are employed to castigate the inhabitants of the same hamlet or street. Contentious meetings are held in rapid succession in nearly every tiny division of the land—and thus the minds of the population are kept in a state of feverish and unfriendly feeling.

(2.) AS TO THE CAUSE OF DISSENTION.—This lamentable state of society originates in different sources, and is seen in a variety of manifestations. But unquestionably ecclesiastical matters produce the most heartfelt and extensive excitements; and people, in their religious capacity, carry on the most angry disputations. Commercial embarrassments and political agitation produce very painful estrangements; but they are not so heated, general, or enduring as those which spring from ecclesiastical oppression,—of which the law-church is the real and exclusive parent. To establish this last position is the purport of the present essay.—THIS DISCORD—

FIRST.—ORIGINATES IN NEITHER CHRISTIANITY NOR DISSENT.

I. IT IS NOT CAUSED BY THE RELIGION OF JESUS CHRIST.—The gospel is, indeed, an aggressive system, boldly assailing every form and degree of error and vice, the perpetrators and abettors of which naturally resent all attempts to overturn their favourite notions and to arrest their career of impiety—as the records of the apostolic, and every subsequent, age fully testify. But no wise and candid man will ascribe to the gospel the angry contentions of wicked men while opposing divine truth, any more than they would attribute to the righteous and protective laws of the land, an uproarious conflict between the officers of justice and a gang of highway robbers. Nor would they confound the legitimate effects of the gospel with its iniquitous abuse. Fools and infidels are accustomed to lay to the charge of christianity all the evils perpetrated in its name, or by its professed adherents. But infidels and fools are the only persons who would thus outrage one of the plainest rules of consistent reasoning. The religion of Christ is as full of love as of truth; and calculated to render men as kind to each other as faithful to God.

II. NOR IS IT CAUSED BY EVANGELICAL DISSENT.—Dissenters are an oppressed and injured body of people; and, while honestly resisting the tyrannical influence of their oppressor, may occasion, but can never be said to cause, a conflict. “Woe to that man by whom the offence cometh.” The state-church is not merely an erring system, with which theological debate might be held, as between two or more voluntary denominations; but it is a usurping and domineering sect, employing anti-christian laws and agencies to compel dissenters to support its unscriptural dogmas; and from the guilt of doing which they cannot possibly escape, except by strong pro-

testations and resolute opposition. Ignorant episcopalians lay the charge of all our religious contentions at the door of those nonconformists who will not tamely submit to the controul, robbery, and contempt of the endowed church. They gravely say, "Let us alone and there will be quietness;" so says the burglar to his victim, "Make no resistance, and there will be no strife:" so says the tyrant to his vassals, "Submit, and we shall all live in peace." LET THE CHURCH CEASE TO INSULT, OPPRESS, AND PILFER DISSENTERS, AND THE WISHED FOR END WILL BE ATTAINED, AND NOT BEFORE.—THIS DISCORD—

SECONDLY.—ORIGINATES WITH THE PARLIAMENTARY CHURCH.

1. *By its insulting and insufferable arrogance.*—The state priesthood assume to be not merely wiser and better than dissenting preachers; but to be the *only* qualified and authorised ministers of religion in the country—gravely asserting that none beside themselves have any just claim to the title or office of christian pastors or teachers. These clerical prerogatives are also claimed for the most ignorant and ungodly state-parsons equally as for the most learned and pious. This supposed exclusive qualification and authority are preached up in nearly every parliamentary pulpit, and contended for in almost every house, accessible to its advocates. Now, when it is assuredly known and demonstrable that the national clergy have no more divine warrant, or legal right, or personal abilities, to preach the gospel than nonconformists; the insult is properly felt and justly resented; nor can there be any peace with a party making such iniquitous pretensions.

II. *By its constant and disgraceful persecution of dissenters.*—The laws and spirit of the church are highly sectarian and intolerant; as much so now as in the days of Elizabeth and Laud. And, in accordance with their creeds, all true church zealots fail not to vent, as far as our civil laws and public opinion will allow, their unholy hatred on all voluntary communions of dissenters. Their modes of annoyance are often as paltry as they are malicious. They abuse dissenters as a mean, ignoble, and deceitful class of people; and labour to traduce them in the eyes of the world. They will seldom deal with a dissenting tradesman, or employ a dissenting servant or workman, or let an estate or house to a dissenting tenant. And, further, they exercise all their influence to induce others to follow their bigotted example. On the other hand, they scarcely ever object to support or patronize profane and profligate abstainers from the dissenting meeting-house. Therefore, peace with such a party is really impossible.

III. *By its outrageous opposition to dissenting efforts.*—The clergy and their adherents seldom object to mountebank or wild-beast exhibitions in their parishes; nor do they often violently oppose the setting up of beer-shops and brothels in their vicinity; nor make much ado about the swearing, drunkenness, and sabbath-breaking, of their neighbours. But let a pious dissenter visit their districts to preach the words of eternal life, (which he has as much right to do as Paul had to preach at Corinth or Athens,) and the mob, either headed or set on by the clergy and their genteel coadjutors, use their utmost efforts to prevent him. All kinds of abuse and blasphemous language are uttered against him; an uproar is raised, and missiles the most offensive and dangerous are hurled at him; and then, probably, he is sent to jail, fined, and otherwise punished for crea-

ting a riot—by clerical and true church justices of the peace! Could the great enemy of souls do worse, or fairly provoke stronger opposition?

IV. *By compelling all dissenters to support what their consciences condemn.*—All enlightened evangelical nonconformists regard the establishment as antichristian, and the disseminator of numerous glaring and deadly errors. And in this view of the church, as shown in previous papers, they are fully sustained by the frank admissions of many eminent conformists. For them to dissent, therefore, is absolutely requisite for preserving their consciences from the guilt of countenancing and practically abetting all the sins and evils of the state-worship. But this does not free them from paying directly or remotely towards upholding and propagating its numerous heresies. Through the operation of the tithe-system, and parliamentary grants, and by the imposition of church-rates and easter-dues, they are coerced into the surrender of large sums every year to feed their enemies, the state-clergy, and to provide them with religious edifices and sacramental bread and wine.—A cause of strife more abundant could not be imagined.

V. *By its insatiate, grasping, and monopolizing disposition.*—Though the laws of the land recognize dissent, and grant nonconformity a legal standing in the country; the church denounces it, and, if possible, would soon root it out of the land. The clergy of, practically, not more than a third of the population must hold and exercise all ecclesiastical prerogatives:—they must teach all—preach to all—baptize all—marry all—bury all—receive all!! They must fill every religious office, even down to the most paltry. Though the income of the hierarchy can be little less than £10,000,000 a year, nearly all derived from public property, and towards which *five millions* of nonconformists are obliged to surrender their full proportion, the state priesthood are clamorously calling for more; and will give the legislature no peace unless they are allowed to filch dissenters, as well as churchmen, *to the tune* of millions more, to enhance their glory and power. Here is a further cause of social discord among us.

VI. *By its unscriptural and dishonourable modes of proselytism.*—To employ arguments and spiritual weapons—if they can produce them—to enlarge their dwindling numbers, and to prop up their shaking interest; would offer no just grounds or denominational offence. But this the clergy and their adherents seldom attempt. They do not even simply preach up their own exclusive claims and virtues, nor merely misrepresent and traduce those of evangelical nonconformists; but they are prodigal of temporal bribes to allure the necessitous, and of fearful threats to alarm and coerce the timid. Tradesmen must lose their custom, the labourer his work, and the poor all christmas and other parochial charities, at the disposal of the priesthood—if they continue to attend the meeting-house or send their children to dissenting sabbath-schools. In this way it strives to rob the chapel and to thin its scriptural seminaries—coercing the conscience and occasionally filling the church with the disaffected victims of its own corruptions and cruelty.

The church presents many other causes of national discord; a few of which I will just enumerate, as examples of the whole:—

(1.) *Its parochial and periodical conflicts respecting church-rates*—by which its consecrated edifices are crowded with angry and uproarious parties, and by which lasting ill-will and hatred are engendered in the parish.

(2.) *Its annual parliamentary campaigns and warfare*—often occupying large portions of the sessions—calling forth the most violent debates—and frequently agitating the nation from one end to the other.

(3.) *Its determined and powerful opposition to all beneficial reform*—being the chief, and sometimes the only, obstacle in the way of conceding to the people those exemptions and privileges for which they righteously contend.

(4.) *Its grievous oppression of the humbler classes of society*—who, after all, are indirectly the chief contributors to the hierarchy; and by being so they are frequently reduced to difficulties and want.

(5.) *Its extorting millions from the public, to pamper its officers*—and which the latter profusely lavish on their own persons, apply to their family ostentation, or employ in crushing their religious and political opponents.

(6.) *The fierce, continuous, and universal contentions of the clergy*—whose tongues, pulpits, and pens are violently opposed to each other, and whose conflicts are felt and hotly carried on by the divided masses of the community.

In these and similar ways the state-church is the cause of the most deep-rooted discord in this country. It is the aggressor and persecutor, the oppressor and inflicter of grievous insults and injuries. Other sects may have their theological contests, and may occasionally exceed the limits of moderate disputation. Yet they never physically oppress nor rob each other of their goods and chattels, nor distract the mind of the country. But the hierarchy, as far as the law of the land will allow (and the latitude given is large) manifests an earnest disposition to crush and ruin all who resist its unrighteous claims, or cease to commune at its popish altars.

THIRDLY.—THERE IS NO OTHER EQUAL SOURCE OF DISCORD.

There are, unquestionably many others; but none are so extensive or continuous as that of the state religion. No others are so calculated to annoy, irritate, or rouse into contention, a very large proportion of the population. No others so affect men's Christian principles or consciences, or so place them in the painful dilemma of either disobeying God, or grievously suffering for their fidelity to his superior claims.

I. MARK ITS PROVOKING AND INCOMPARABLE HYPOCRISY—in a few manifest instances. (1.) It pretends to christian FORBEARANCE towards all mankind, while exercising a most iniquitous TYRANNY over all it can possibly controul. (2.) It professes to cherish brotherly kindness and CHARITY, while displaying the most sectarian and ANATHEMATIZING spirit. (3.) It prays for the EXTENSION of the christian religion, while violently OPPOSING those who devoutly attempt to diffuse its sacred doctrines and precepts. (4.) It preaches up personal MORTIFICATION and deadness to the world, while moving heaven and earth to increase its present ENORMOUS REVENUES.

II. MARK ITS WONTED AND INSULTING CRUELTY—in the cases already mentioned. (1.) IT HINDERS dissenters from instructing and saving the people, the clergy have not the will, or power, or wisdom, rightly to teach. (2.) IT COMPELS the needy and famishing poor to contribute indirectly, at least a tenth of their earnings to pamper its haughty and over-fed priesthood. (3.) IT FORCES multitudes to sacrifice their principles, and to sin against their consciences, in order to preserve their trade, posts, and employments. (4.) IT OBLIGES all nonconformists to pay for propagating notions which they regard as directly at variance with the plain revelation of God.

And all this is done UNIVERSALLY and PERPETUALLY—as I am prepared to prove against every argument the clergy can bring to refute my assertions. Therefore, in conclusion, it may be truly and fearlessly averred that “THE STATE CHURCH IS THE CHIEF SOURCE OF NATIONAL DISCORD.”

THE STATE CHURCH

THE CHIEF HINDERANCE TO THE GOSPEL.

By the Rev. W. THORN, Winchester.

"But suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ." 1 Cor. ix. 12.

MOST High-church people contend that their ecclesiastical system is essential to the conservation of divine truth, and the conversion of souls to Christ, in this country; that its pastors alone are qualified to administer the word and sacraments, with saving effect; and that its institutions alone are adapted to keep the ordinances of the gospel pure, and to give permanency and expansion to the cause of godliness, among us! They assume that all the spiritual good effected in the nation is to be ascribed to the state-religion, and that dissenting ministers are mere blanks, or rather, great stumbling-blocks, in the way of the clergyman's success!

To meet these unsupported assertions with a mere negative—pronouncing them groundless and untrue—would not be sufficiently faithful to the hierarchy, nor be doing justice to the principles and operations of evangelical dissenters. I shall, therefore, endeavour to prove, to the satisfaction of every pious, intelligent, and candid reader, that the state-church—so far from being the sole or the principal means of spiritual usefulness—is, in fact, the chief hinderance to the gospel of Christ in this kingdom. And, to open the way for the better discussion of this subject, four propositions must be made, the truth of which no real Christian will deny.

(1.) That the gospel of Christ is perfectly adapted to commend itself to the judgment and conscience of every man, as being the revealed will of God.

(2.) That considerable success may be reasonably expected to succeed a due and divinely regulated promulgation of the gospel of Christ.

(3.) That the present success of the gospel is far from commensurate with the agents employed and the money expended for its diffusion in this country.

(4.) And that the real success of the gospel consists in an intelligent and cordial reception of the distinguishing doctrines the gospel unfolds, and a practical observance of the duties it inculcates.—Two questions now arise:—

FIRST.—WHAT IS NOT THE CHIEF HINDERANCE TO THE GOSPEL?

I. *It cannot be THEOLOGICALLY ascribed to any unwillingness in God to save mankind.*—Whatever Antinomians or Fatalists may assert on this recondite subject, it is very manifest that Jehovah has graciously and repeatedly promised to bless his own truth—when faithfully dispensed by persons mentally, morally, and spiritually competent to the task—when sustained only by the means its heavenly Author has appointed—when enforced only by the motives which itself supplies—when exemplified in the temper and conduct of its official advocates—and when accompanied with fervent prayer for a divine blessing. In confirmation of this doctrine, God has frequently and remarkably fulfilled his word, by granting to those who have sown bountifully the honour and pleasure of reaping the same. Any deviations from this rule are but exceptions to his established and general procedure.

II. *It cannot be REASONABLY ascribed to the depravity and wickedness of human nature*—or of what is usually designated the "world," as contra-distinguished from the church. It is the conversion and sanctification of the ungodly the means of grace are designed to accomplish; and, therefore, such depravity and wickedness must not be taken into account, while

investigating the extraordinary hinderances to the gospel. Human nature and satanic influence are about the same in all countries and in all ages, and exhibit but the like obstacles to the progress of truth and the conversion of souls now as in former times, and to the state-pastor as to the dissenting preacher. The chief hinderance of the gospel will be found in the churches themselves. "*Lest WE should hinder the gospel of Christ.*"

III. *It cannot be* PRINCIPALLY *ascribed to the evangelical nonconformists of this kingdom.*—They, indeed, have nothing to boast of, and much to deplore. They are conscious that more good might have been effected by them, had they made efforts corresponding with their ability and opportunities. With respect to their institutions, however, they may safely challenge their opponents to find any thing in them calculated, in any material degree, to impede the progress of the gospel. And with regard to their own conduct and exertions they are certainly not chargeable with being the principal hinderance to the conversion of immortal souls. In addition to paying their full proportion to the state-system, they have erected many thousands of places of worship, at their own proper cost—they educate and maintain a very large number of christian ministers—and instruct several myriads of children in their sabbath and daily schools. It is probable that full eight-tenths of all the truly pious people in the nation were converted through their instrumentality, and are embraced by their communions. Rarely is a member of their societies found in a prison, or seen before a magistrate, except for resisting the iniquitous claims of the dominant sect; in opposition to whose powerful hostility they have achieved all their spiritual triumphs.

It must therefore, be NECESSARILY *ascribed to the endowed church of this country.*—This inference is drawn, not simply from the circumstance that the chief cause of hindering the gospel cannot be found in any other quarter, but from the fact that it is easily discovered in the church of England. I shall therefore now show,—

SECONDLY.—HOW THE STATE-CHURCH HINDERS THE GOSPEL.

I. *By pre-occupying the ground with an incompetent agency.*—This statement admits of many exceptions—there being not a few clergymen as holy, zealous, and industrious as any found in the ranks of dissent. But I now speak of the bulk of the national priesthood; who, by general admission, are sadly unqualified to lead sinners to Christ and to glory. These permanently fill those stations which would otherwise be occupied by such spiritually qualified pastors as, there is reason to believe, would be the means of saving many of the souls at present deluded and lost. Nor would there be any great difficulty in sufficiently enlarging the sphere of such efforts. The voluntary principle is naturally self-extending and self-existing, and would readily obtain agency and support sufficient to carry the gospel into every village and hamlet in the land. This, however, is materially hindered by the legal location of thousands of unconverted and hostile clergy in every tiny division of the nation.

II. *By labouring to defeat the efforts of those who faithfully preach the*

gospel; and in this the church too frequently succeeds. As persons become thorough and consistent episcopalians, in that same degree they become enemies to pious nonconformists, and to the simple institutions of Christ. For example, the Puseyites are our most complete and honest churchmen; and yet are the greatest bigots and persecutors in the kingdom. This class strives most vigorously, and often effectually, to prevent able, pious, and useful dissenting ministers, from preaching the gospel in the dark parts of the country, and the people every where from attending and profiting by their evangelical labours. Such conformists neither lead their flocks to heaven, nor suffer others to supply their lack of ministerial service.

III. *By impoverishing the pious and efficient advocates of the gospel.*—The church extorts between two and three millions annually from evangelical christians of other sects, for the purpose of enriching its own numerous and incompetent agency. This enormous sum is taken from those who would otherwise apply it to diffuse the knowledge of Christ; and it is given to men, most of whom never spiritually profit the people they profess to teach. If not thus unscripturally pilfered, nonconformists might employ *full ten or twelve thousand* more preachers than they do at present, each with a salary of £200 a year. The good that must be effected by such an additional instrumentality would be most extensive and lasting. But the exactions of the church prevent this expansion of labour; and the consequent benefits that would most assuredly follow.

IV. *By interesting its own people so little in religious affairs;* and through which entire spiritual indifference is frequently produced. They cannot choose their own pastor, nor determine what they shall individually pay toward his support. They can rectify nothing they may deem erroneous; nor dissent, in scarcely any instance, without suffering some temporal loss. They can take no active part in any spiritual exercises; and very seldom have they a voice in any ecclesiastical affair. The clergy are every thing, the people are nothing. The result is natural—the mass of the congregation takes little or no interest in what is said or done. Apathy characterizes its profession; no excitement is experienced; and, except in very rare cases, no saving benefit is obtained by these avowed yet unconcerned adherents of the state-worship.

V. *By giving a pernicious prominence to useless rites and forms.*—This causes the great end of christianity to be mostly overlooked. Persons have only to be christened and confirmed by the clergy in order to be recognized and treated as genuine believers. Let them attend stately, or even occasionally, the services of the parish church; read after the parson, and respond with the the clerk; turn, bow, sit, kneel, and so on, in accordance with the rubric; and they will receive every attention and respect due to the most holy disciple of Christ; and, as truly pious and regenerated persons, will at last be consigned to the silent tomb! Hence, for them to rest in forms, and to assume themselves to be secure, even while unconverted and unholy, is what might be fully expected, and what is generally found to be the fact. The like may be averred respecting the substitution of

mere morality in the place of saving faith in Christ, love to God, and gospel obedience—which is done by multitudes of the state-clergy; who also preach up the most strange and heterodox notions, instead of genuine christianity.

VI. *Alienating the great body of the people from their state-pastors*, and thereby preventing any considerable amount of good from being effected by their highest and purest endeavours. The clergy, as a body, but with many exceptions, alienate the people from themselves, and thereby from the religion they inculcate—

1. *By their personal consequence*.—Most of this order appear to regard themselves as gentlemen of such high distinction, as to be pre-eminent not only over all dissenting pastors, but also of the respectable laymen of their own persuasion—thereby disgusting every sensible witness of their deportment.

2. *By their official assumptions*.—They and they only are the real successors of the apostles—they can ensure the regeneration of all they baptize—the favour of God to all they confirm—pardon to all they absolve—and heaven to all they inter. But, alas for them! most people readily see through the delusion.

3. *By their puerile exhibitions*.—Their positions, attitudes, bowings, turnings, attirings, and the like, are intended for effect; and effect is produced; but it is, that the parsons are at play; and that they cannot be earnestly seeking the salvation of the souls committed to their charge.

4. *By their spiritual ignorance*.—Many of them are manifestly unacquainted with the doctrines of the cross, and still more of them with the work of the Holy Spirit in their hearts; as religious guides, therefore, no intelligent and serious person can safely place any confidence in them.

5. *By their covetous dispositions*.—The last farthing the law will permit, they squeeze out of their parishioners; and every charity left for educating the young and relieving the necessitous, which they can grasp at with impunity, is almost sure to be appropriated to themselves and their families.

6. *By their persecuting spirit*.—Speaking from observations, made not far from home, I should say there is no class of functionaries in the kingdom so disposed to punish, without mercy, those who, in any way, thwart their purposes, deny their claims, or withdraw from their fellowship.

7. *By their unchristian deportment*.—Apparently knowing nothing of vital godliness, they live without a sense of its restraining or exciting influences, and are not morally distinguishable from mere men of the world. Hence they obtain little credit for sincerity in their most pious and fervid appeals from the pulpit.

8. *By their political bias*.—Almost every state-priest gives his voice, vote, and energies, in direct opposition to the aims and interests of the middle and poorer classes of society—and supports almost every measure calculated to keep them ignorant and needy—and they know it, and hate and despise him for it.

Such being the character and conduct of the great body of the national clergy, (who by the way, are in general but just what the church makes them,) it is no wonder that there should be so little sympathy between them and their people; and that the latter should derive such a very small amount of benefit from their ministrations—even supposing these to be a vast deal more scriptural than they confessedly are.

In conclusion—and though “the half has not been told”—it must now be apparent to all candid persons, crediting the previous statements, (which I challenge the clergy to invalidate,) that **THE STATE-CHURCH IS THE CHIEF HINDERANCE TO THE GOSPEL among us**—That it is so constituted as to draw down but a very small measure of divine blessing upon its adherents—and That while it shall continue to be a state-governed church, it is not likely to be much less obstructive to the cause of God and the good of immortal souls than it is at the present moment.

THE SURPRISING IGNORANCE OF MANY DEVOUT EPISCOPALIANS.

By the Rev. W. THORN, Winchester.

My business now is not with the GREAT BODY of avowed conformists, most of whom appear neither to understand, nor to care any thing about, genuine religion; and who, it is probable, would readily adopt ANY creed or profession that offered them the greatest worldly advantages, or that checked them least in their unholy career.

But it is with those who may be properly designated "DEVOUT EPISCOPALIANS," who are supposed to take considerable interest in ecclesiastical matters, and to be at some pains and expence to ascertain the precise meaning of the word of God, their own sectarian sentiments, and the distinguishing principles of evangelical dissent.

Nor shall I call in question the knowledge of this class of professors respecting the fundamental doctrines of salvation, by faith in Christ, or of holiness in heart and life, through the operations of the Divine Spirit. The ignorance I refer to concerns the INSTITUTIONS, GOVERNMENT, AND CEREMONIES of christianity; which, though not the more vital parts, are yet of vast importance in the economy, of religion.

That all persons, scripturally enlightened, and well informed in such matters, may recognize and admit the correctness of my representations; I shall notice such cases only as are plain, incontrovertible, and of daily occurrence. And for the purpose of simplifying the subject, I shall divide those characters into four classes:—

THE FIRST CLASS OF IGNORANT EPISCOPALIANS.—
These are so ignorant of the plain, manifest, and frequently admitted, errors and evils of THEIR OWN DENOMINATION, as seriously and conscientiously to deny their existence in the creeds, canons, services, and sanctioned practices of the endowed sect.—For example,

I. They deny that *Baptismal Regeneration* is the doctrine of their own church; or that it really declares every person baptized by the clergy to be then regenerated by the Holy Ghost, and rendered safe for heaven.

II. They deny that *Priestly Absolution* is really taught and practised by the state-clergy, or that their system professedly invests them with a power to pardon transgressors—just like the catholic religion.

III. They deny that every youth learning the *Church Catechism* is really instructed to believe himself a genuine christian, and that he was made so when baptized by the priest in the parish church.

IV. They deny that the bishop really professes to *give the Holy Spirit* to all the young men he ordains to the ministry; or that the efficacy of their future labours is made to depend on this supposed communication.

V. They deny that the doctrine of *Consubstantiation*, or "the marvellous incorporation of the body and blood of Christ," in the elements of the Lord's Supper, is contained in their church, or taught by its clergy.

VI. They deny that their creeds, canons, and clergy in general, breathe sentiments as uncharitable and *persecuting* towards all who dissent from their system, as are to be found in the Romish Church.

VII. They deny that the civil government really holds and exercises *supreme* legislative and executive *authority* in the state-church, and that the divine headship of Christ is thereby virtually and practically destroyed.

VIII. They deny that the clergy and other church officials are actually enjoying a *vast amount of property*, originally given to, and only intended for, the education of the young, and the relief of the poor, in this country.

IX. They deny that every person christened and confirmed in the endowed church is *constitutionally* a practical member of it; and that however unrighteous, if not excommunicated, is fully entitled to all its consolations.

X. They deny that in the *Burial Service* the officiating minister really pronounces every impenitent person he canonically inters to be as safe and happy as the most holy and useful christian he commits to the earth.

These cases are mentioned only as examples. Their existence is as clear and certain as any other sentiment and practice of the church, and is admitted by the most learned and talented men the establishment ever contained. And yet, this class of churchmen stoutly denies it, and charges dissenters with uttering iniquitous falsehoods when bringing such allegations against their favourite system. Such people can have never carefully or candidly examined their own ecclesiastical opinions and doings; or must have been misled by parties whose interest it is to keep them in the dark; or must have considered the evils too great to exist in a sect claiming to be protestant, professedly guided by the Bible, and embracing many godly clergymen.

THE SECOND CLASS OF IGNORANT EPISCOPALIANS.—

These are so ignorant of the true intent and meaning of DIVINE REVELATION, as to regard all the foregoing, as well as the following, errors and evils of the church to be perfectly accordant with scripture.—For example; in addition to approving what has been previously enumerated—

I. They believe that the use of *sponsors* in baptism, pledging and promising, in the name of the person christened, to perform what it is impossible for them to effect, is quite agreeable to Holy Scripture.

II. They believe that the *imposition of ministers*, on settled congregations, by officers of state, bishops, private gentlemen, and ladies, without consulting the people, is to be sustained by God's word.

III. They believe that the *forcible exaction* of tithes, church-rates, easter-dues, and clerical fees, is in perfect agreement with revelation, and that the ministers of the state-gospel are warranted in doing it.

IV. They believe that the *existing grades* of spiritual officers in the English hierarchy—from the lord primate down to the village curate—deacons, canons, archdeacons, and all included—are perfectly Christian.

V. They believe that *all* our state-bishops and clergy, the godly and graceless, are real and *genuine successors* of the first apostles, and that none beside are authorised to preach the gospel of Christ in this country.

VI. They believe that for the priest always to read the same *forms of prayer*—which were composed by erring mortals and enforced by the civil government—without the least liberty of alteration, is really apostolical.

VII. They believe that the *white surplice*, bowing at the word Jesus, looking toward the east, kneeling at the Lord's supper, reading the Apocrypha, with all their other liturgical arrangements, are enjoined in the Bible.

VIII. They believe that the *prelatical consecration* of churches, graveyards, and public cemeteries, before the clergy should be allowed to officiate in them, is in perfect keeping with the precepts of scripture.

IX. They believe that *ecclesiastical courts*, in which the clergy or their proxies preside, adjudicating in matters affecting divorce, wills, &c. and sending conscientious christians to jail, are really gospel institutions.

X. They believe that to observe religiously a great number of *feast and fast days* annually, in memory of popish and protestant saints and sinners, is truly agreeable to the New Testament.

That this class of devout episcopalians does actually believe all the foregoing acts and notions to be agreeable to divine revelation, is manifest from its repeated declarations to that effect, its habitually sanctioning them by remaining in the national church, and by its unsparing condemnation of those who pronounce them to be contrary to the revealed will of God. But that people, with the slightest pretensions to the Christian name, should be so exceedingly ill-informed in the Christian scriptures, as to imagine that such sentiments and proceedings are accordant with inspiration, is indeed, as surprising as it is true.

THE THIRD CLASS OF IGNORANT EPISCOPALIANS.—
These are so ignorant of the supreme and EXCLUSIVE AUTHORITY of the scriptures, as to infer that their plain and positive doctrines and precepts may be overlooked and even rejected, with the approbation of God.

I. They suppose that whatever the *chief political power* of this country—and consequently of every other—may command in religious matters, the people are at liberty and are even bound, to adopt and observe; and that should any thing thus enjoined be clearly at variance with the revealed will of God, they who impose, and not those who obey, it will alone be answerable to the Judge of all at the last day!

II. They suppose that God looks only at the *hearts or affections of mankind*; that their religious institutions, creeds, canons, and modes of worship, are of little or no account with him, provided they themselves are sincere, cherish holy motives, and lead virtuous lives; and that though the church contains many things palpably contrary to scripture, a devout conscience fully sanctifies them all!

III. They suppose that it is the duty of *all loyal and good subjects* to be of the same religious sect and profession as the Sovereign—the actual head of the church—that on no account should men violate the unity of the national communion—and that God is better pleased at our breaking his plain and positive laws than at our turning schismatics, and separating from the state-worship—whatever be its character or corruptions!

That this popish and heathenish notion is held by the ignorant conformists now referred to, is evident from the simple fact, that they openly avow

it, while apologizing for their own conformity and attacking protestant dissent. On no other principle can they consistently adhere to the avowedly unscriptural institutions, sentiments, and operations of the state-religion. Yet this very principle is utterly and repeatedly exposed and condemned in the word of God. And the legitimate carrying out of this monstrous doctrine virtually dethrones the Saviour, renders the Bible of no legislative authority, and sanctions the vilest superstitions that ever disgraced the world.

THE FOURTH CLASS OF IGNORANT EPISCOPALIANS.

—*These are so ignorant of the real nature, principles, and proceedings of EVANGELICAL DISSENT, as to pronounce it more unscriptural than the Church of England, with all its manifold corruptions.*—I reply,—

I. *That this accusation is characterized by the grossest ignorance.*—Not one of all the grave charges previously adduced against the state-church, nor any thing comparable with it, is applicable to evangelical dissent. Indeed, I challenge all the church parsons and people in the country to prove, if they can, that the constitution, doctrines, order of officers, discipline, sanctioned deportment, forms of worship, modes of support, ministration of sacraments, &c. among evangelical dissenters, contain any sentiments or practices materially different from the plain and expressed will of God. Let the conformist, who brings such wholesale charges give his objections in detail, and prove them by reference to our standard declarations of faith and worship, (as I have done in reference to his own church,) and then expect our credence—but not before.

II. *That this accusation may be easily accounted for.*—The perpetual misrepresentations of dissent by the clergy and their interested partizans—The gross ignorance and credulity of those who look up to such prejudiced authorities for information—The confounding of evangelical persuasions with those who are confessedly heterodox, and who are really no more connected with them than churchmen are with socialists—And because this mode of reply is the easiest way to quiet the consciences of a people, rendered somewhat uncomfortable by the repeated exposures of the corruptions of the church, by intelligent and honest dissenters.

III. *That this accusation can be easily refuted.*—Let the churchman make himself thoroughly acquainted with his own system, and with the principles and procedure of evangelical dissent, and then fairly and justly compare both with the true and obvious sense of the Holy Scriptures; and he will most certainly perceive that the charge is not only unfounded, but absolutely the reverse of the truth. Thousands have done so and forsaken the establishment, to unite with evangelical dissenting societies—and that too when their secession has been opposed by the most appalling obstacles.

But I must conclude this paper by expressing—1. A BELIEF that the foregoing indisputable statements will be deemed amply sufficient to prove "THE SURPRISING IGNORANCE OF MANY DEVOUT EPISCOPALIANS." And, 2. A HOPE that Conformists will hence learn the danger of trusting, for ecclesiastical knowledge, to such ill-informed and prejudiced guides as the state priesthood, who mostly exert all their personal, official, and relative influence, to prevent mankind from hearing such ministers and reading such publications as tend to dispel from their minds the mists and darkness which, for centuries past, the law-church has spread over them.

ACCOMMODATING CONSCIENCES OF ENLIGHTENED EPISCOPALIANS.

By the Rev. W. THORN, Winchester.

THERE are numerous members of the church of England who know and confess that it contains and promulgates many doctrines and ceremonies directly contrary to divine revelation, and utterly subversive of its manifest intentions. Some of these persons go as far as any enlightened dissenter in contending that the Bible ought to be regarded as our sufficient, supreme, and exclusive guide in all religious affairs; and in deploring and condemning, one by one, nearly every arrangement, notion, and rite, peculiar to the state-system, and differing from those of evangelical dissent. No person, conversant with the views of these church people, will question the truth of this representation.

Yet, astounding as it must appear to all consistent and conscientious nonconformists, these intelligent people are episcopalians still!—attending the parish church regularly; uniting in all its services with apparent cordiality; freely subscribing towards its support and extension; taking their children to its founts for baptism, to its altars for confirmation, and to its schools for education; they are married by its priests; commune at its table; and intend to be buried in its cemeteries! In a word, they fully and formally sanction all its works and ways, virtually say Amen to all its sentiments, and seem to pride themselves in appertaining to its fellowship! Amidst all this palpable hypocrisy, they regard themselves as pious individuals, and as much entitled to the smiles of the Almighty and the honour of all good men, as the most consistent adherent of the inspired volume!—I shall now specify—

FIRST.—THE PROPERTIES BY WHICH THEY ARE CHARACTERIZED.

Conscience is “The knowledge or faculty by which we judge of the goodness or wickedness of ourselves.” JOHNSON:—or, “The testimony and secret judgment of the soul which gives its approbation to actions that it thinks good, or reproaches itself with those which it believes to be evil.” CRUDEN:—or, to regard its EFFECTS only, it is the pleasure pious and consistent minds naturally feel in reflecting on their obedience to the word of God; or the sorrow they experience in reviewing their ascertained transgressions of his will.

Admitting the truth of these definitions, some persons might think the aforesaid enlightened conformists must either be always miserable or possess no conscience at all. But neither of these suppositions is correct. They have a conscience, because it is an essential attribute of man; and they are not often unhappy, because they prevent it from performing its legitimate office. That they have not an enlightened, sanctified, faithful, and tender conscience in religious affairs is demonstrable. Then, it may be inquired, what kind of conscience have they? Let it be personified, and the following description of it will not be far from the truth.—There is,

I. THE BLIND CONSCIENCE—whose visual organs are so completely hood-winked every time its owners attend the parish church, as to be unable to perceive what they are about; or to see that they are openly sanctioning any thing they admit to be contrary to the holy scriptures.

II. THE DEAF CONSCIENCE—whose ears are so completely closed, on all convenient occasions, that it never hears its possessors condemn the

doctrines, institutions, or services of the church they regularly patronize; and entertains not the slightest conception that they regard any of them as contrary to divine revelation.

III. THE DUMB CONSCIENCE.—Though aware of and vexed with those who condemn the church as heterodox and pernicious, and yet attend it as if perfectly christian; it is so thoroughly muffled and gagged that it can articulate nothing distinctly, and its half-stifled clamours are no more regarded than a passing “puff of noisy breath.”

IV. THE IGNORANT CONSCIENCE—so stupified as to perceive nothing worthy of condemnation in men first lauding the scriptures as the supreme, sufficient, and only oracles of heaven; and then encouraging and sustaining a cause which sets them aside entirely, or renders them subordinate to tradition, expediency, or popish inventions.

V. THE INSENSIBLE CONSCIENCE.—As if “scared with a hot iron,” it feels no insult to its prerogatives, nor any outrage on its sacred province. Its possessors may act as inconsistently as they please: like a paralyzed limb, it is susceptible of no impression, and reposes inactive amidst all their inequitable procedure.

VI. THE FEEBLE CONSCIENCE—which has been so long starved and maltreated as to be reduced to a miserable, puny, shrivelled existence, a mere imp, without vigour or authority; whose efforts are too imbecile to stay the inconsistent in their hypocritical career, and its advice too faint to command the serious attention of headstrong and reckless professors.

VII. THE SERVILE CONSCIENCE—which is brought into a state of absolute subjection to the will; and, instead of being the enthroned viceroy of God in the soul, is reduced to the poor dupe and vassal of the mind, without influence or dominion, and compelled to sanction, to say, and to do, whatever its tyrannical lord shall command.

VIII. THE SECTARIAN CONSCIENCE—which feels and sorely resents the failings of dissenters, but not of conformists; marks with indignation the smallest inconsistency out of the church, but passes over the greatest within it—that strains at a meeting-house gnat, and swallows an episcopalian camel—and that deplores every vice but its own.

IX. THE PARTIAL CONSCIENCE—making a tremendous stir about abstract falsehood, but being silent about pernicious false doctrines; loudly condemning political hypocrisy, but tacitly sanctioning religious duplicity; being awfully shocked at deception in matters of business, but quite unaffected at the compromise of spiritual principles.

X. THE ELASTIC CONSCIENCE—which is able and willing to swallow any mess the church may dish up and set before it. It readily bolts down Baptismal regeneration—Priestly absolution—The Athanasian creed—Consubstantiation—The indecent Marriage service—The Burial service—The service for king Charles the martyr—The Church Catechism—The Apocrypha—Apostolical Succession—Patronage—Consecration of build-

ings—The vows of sponsors—The public reading of parliamentary prayers—The religious headship of the state—Coercive taxation. In a word, it easily dispatches the prayer-book, canons, articles, homilies, ordination service, &c. whole and entire; though a mere fragment of any one of them would choke almost any genuine bible christian in the land!

SECONDLY.—THE INFLUENCES BY WHICH THEY ARE MODIFIED.

The conscience, in ordinary circumstances, like most other human faculties, is subject to the controul of its possessor. Suppose it still personified, and by efforts more or less powerful and prolonged, you may close its eyes, stop its ears, tie its tongue, benumb its feelings, fetter its limbs, and lull it to repose; or, like a second Samson enslaved, you may, at least for a time, make it see, hear, say, feel, and swallow what you please, awake at your call, and move at your command. To effect this subjection, however, is not always a very easy task, as many a sturdy intellect has frequently discovered. Hence three questions arise—

I. *By what means is the conscience so sadly prostrated?*—These have been severally implied in the preceding observations. It may be here cursorily remarked, that these enlightened churchmen, wheedle their conscience with fair speeches—bribe it with large promises—scold it in angry terms—and threaten it with severe castigations. They prevent the knowledge of the head from descending to its compartment in the heart. They disregard its voice till, wearied and despairing, it speaks no more. Or, should it intelligibly remonstrate against their inconsistencies, they clap a lock on its jaws, and soon force it into silence. And, should it still manifest any serious resistance, they speedily whip it into a servile subjection to their own sectarian purposes.

II. *What induces such a tampering with conscience?*—It may be safely affirmed that it is not done through Love to God—Love to divine truth—Love to evangelical holiness—or Love to the cause which Christ has established in the earth. But it is done through—

(1.) *Anxiety about secular gain*—in the poor, of charity—in the tradesman, of buisness—in professional men, of employment. Were they to follow the dictates of a scripturally enlightened conscience, and leave the church they so often condemn, serious losses might be the result; therefore, “they choose iniquity rather than affliction.”

(2.) *Love of mental tranquility*.—By perpetually “sinning against the light,” no peace of mind could be felt were conscience not silenced, kept in the dark, dosed with opiates, or bribed into acquiescence. This being done, fear and alarm flee away, and enlightened conformists enjoy serenity, even while knowingly transgressing the commandments of God.

(3.) *Erroneous conceptions of sin*—imagining that what is done with an approving conscience, however blinded by ignorance, custom, or selfishness, is not criminal. But this would make the sin of any action depend on our varying notions, and not on the immutable nature of truth or the revealed will of God—and would prove that human sacrifices in heathen countries are not crimes in the sight of heaven!

(4.) *Desire for worldly respectability*—which, in the usual sense of the words, can generally be more easily obtained in the state-church than in the nonconforming chapel. And as it is essential to their notions of happiness, they compel conscience to sacrifice its principles that they may quietly move in a circle of society congenial to their temporal ambition.

(5.) *Dislike to religious restrictions*.—Conformists well know that they can pass for good christians, and receive all church privileges and consolations, with notions and conduct condemned by the scriptures, and by every sect of evangelical dissent—and that the latter would afford them no such dignity or comfort without a change both of heart and life.

(6.) *Pride of personal consistency*—not between their convictions and practice, but between their past and present professions. They would deem it quite disreputable to quit a course they have so long pursued, however unscriptural they might discover it to have been. And when conscience says, “Come out of her;” their rejoinder is, “Hold thy peace!”

(7.) *Profession of spiritual loyalty*.—They must and will be of the royal religion, and obey the religious powers that be; though assured that, in numerous important points, its nature and authority are not evangelical. They possibly quiet their conscience by telling it that at the last day the state will be punished for perverting the gospel, and not such good loyal people for yielding to secular mandates, in preference to those of the Almighty!

III. *What are the results of such antichristian procedure?* In brief—

(1.) **IT IS TRULY OFFENSIVE TO GOD.**—“To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin.” “Happy is he that condemneth not himself in the thing which he alloweth.” “For whatever is not of faith is sin.” It is acting on a principle which sets at nought the import and authority of divine truth; and which, in other circumstances, and fully carried out, would lead its advocates to adopt the religion of the pope, the false prophet, or even of Satan himself.

(2.) **IT IS HIGHLY DISREPUTABLE.**—No honest man, whatever be his creed, character, or profession, can witness such inconsistency but with contempt—even though it lead to the augmentation of his own sect; and every real believer must regard it with pity and vexation, and as a shocking development of human depravity. It stamps the subjects of it as hypocrites, religious cowards, and rebels against the truth; and whose integrity can never be entitled to respect or confidence.

(3.) **IT IS FEARFULLY DANGEROUS.**—The time must arrive when conscience will resume its legitimate authority and power, and retaliate with dreadful indignation—repaying, with interest, the violence and insults it has received from its iniquitous oppressors. Sickness, death, or the judgment day at least, will arm it with weapons of the keenest edge, to cut to the heart those who have so grievously resisted its efforts in favour of truth and righteousness.

(4.) **IT SHOULD BE INSTANTLY ABANDONED.**—Let enlightened episcopalians tamper with their conscience no more; let them afford it every means of divine illumination; give it full play, listen to its dictates, and follow its directions. “Let them seek to have their consciences sprinkled from all dead works”—that they may be “void of offence toward God and toward men.” And, finally, let them repent of their past offences, and evince, by their future conduct, that their contrition is heartfelt and sincere.

THE SECTARIAN TACTICS OF THE NATIONAL CLERGY.

By the Rev. W. THORN, Winchester.

In this paper it is intended (1.) To exhibit a few of the many unworthy and incongruous methods the endowed clergy frequently adopt in order to defend and sustain their own official importance, and the peculiar institutions, doctrines, laws, orders, and ceremonies, of the state-religion: and (2.) Thence to show that a cause which necessarily requires and generally employs such expedients and contrivances, misrepresentations and falsehoods, bribery and persecution, for its protection and support, can neither be in accordance with truth and equity, nor sustainable by a fair application of the word of God.

In exposing such clerical tactics the utmost care will be taken to assert nothing which the writer is not prepared to substantiate by a reference to facts and evidence numerous, definite, and incontrovertible. "We speak that we do know, and testify *"that we have seen."* It is not intended, however, to assert or insinuate that ALL the state-clergy follow precisely the same course—their plans vary with their characters, conditions, and local circumstances. Hence an application of the ensuing remarks must be made with reference to such a diversity of priestly procedure.

FIRST.—THEIR INCONCLUSIVE AND CONTRADICTORY LOGIC.

I. In debating with Roman Catholics, who plead antiquity, expediency, &c. their language is, "*The Bible and the Bible only*"—but in arguing with Dissenters, who really adopt this golden rule, they give up the Bible, and refer to tradition, expediency, and the like, in defence of their system—precisely in the same way as the Catholics!

II. They earnestly caution the Catholics against passively submitting to the dictation of a priesthood admitted to be *apostolically ordained* to the ministerial office—yet they labour (and sometimes successfully) to produce the like passive submission to themselves on the mere ground of their supposed apostolic ordination!

III. When bad clergymen are to be defended, they declare that the word and sacraments are *of themselves*, equally effectual, whoever may administer them, (Act 23;)—but when the pious dissenting pastor is to be opposed the efficacy of the word and sacraments no longer depends on their own natures, but on the prelatical ordination of the clergy!

IV. To sustain their long grades of well-paid, richly-fed, and gaily-robed officers, reference is made to the *Levitical Priesthood*—in which no such grades existed, and who were not officially preachers at all! Or we are pointed to the primitive churches—which, say the first reformers, had only two orders of ministers—dependent on their labours or voluntary support!

V. In defending their tithes and other coercive revenues, they refer us to the Mosaic System—which was confined to the holy land and the

levitical family; then to the gifts of the old British Christians, before popery began; then to the beneficence of their pious ancestors, the papists; and then to the grace and generosity of the state!

VI. Because Christ, when solicited, gave his disciples a *model for prayer*, they think themselves bound to read, weekly or daily, petitions composed by erring mortals and enjoined by parliament, without addition, alteration, or subtraction! and to condemn dissenters for copying the example of Christ and his apostles, in praying without a book!

VII. Though their catechism and services were intended for the common people, and to be understood in their plain grammatical sense; yet when condemned, as inculcating dangerous errors, the clergy assure us that they have a double or secret sense, which it requires the learning of a college-bred and bishop-made parson plainly to unfold!

VIII. They frequently and strenuously contend that the church does not teach the falsehoods and false doctrines with which it is charged;—but, when no longer able to sustain this declaration, they coolly turn round, and with consummate assurance, assert that the said falsehoods and false doctrines are all true and divine!

IX. Most evangelical clergymen denounce, or explain away, in the pulpit the errors they teach from the desk, font, altar, and grave; by which they pacify conscience, and piously hope that the truths they preach from their own manuscripts will have more weight with the people than what they read to them out of the incomparable Prayer Book!

X. They gravely plead their concern for the glory of God, even while knowingly inculcating notions subversive of his holy will. “They can be more useful in the church than they could be out of it; and what good man would not sanction a few false doctrines if, by so doing, he might save more immortal souls from everlasting destruction!”

XI. They soberly transfer the guilt arising from the errors they teach, to the civil powers, which enforce their inculcation. As state parsons, they cannot help themselves; they must diffuse those heresies or turn out, and become, like the poor apostles, dependent on voluntary support—which would be neither pleasant nor convenient!

XII. The church is either rich or poor, safe or in jeopardy, advancing or receding, just as it suits a present purpose! Now it is built on a rock—then the dissenters and papists will have it down! Now it abounds with riches and wealthy members—and then it is begging parliament for money, and fighting furiously for a twopenny church rate!

XIII. If honour and interest are supposed to flow from their union with the state, they plead the connexion as most pious and proper; but when the state denies their suit, or chastises their misconduct, they are indignant at such a degrading dependence—it is unscriptural, they will fight for freedom, and set up for themselves!

XIV. When they wish to show their numerical superiority to dissenters, every person, keeping clear of the meeting-house, is polled as a genuine churchman; but when the immoral character of many episcopalians is

mentioned, behold, none are to be regarded as conformists who do not always attend the church and lead very godly lives!

SECOND.—THEIR CONTROVERSIAL MANAGEMENT AND MANŒUVRINGS.

I. Many of them say little or nothing in defence of the church. They are either conscious of its errors, or afraid to expose themselves to the issue of a contest. *Their tactics are to be quiet!* You may maul them without mercy, and yet not induce them openly to defend their official procedure, or to forsake their indefensible and injurious system!

II. Others are constantly trotting about loudly accusing dissenters of bringing false and wicked charges against their pure apostolic church; but when challenged or requested to answer their opponents, they shuffle out of the task, by declaring that the *writers are beneath their notice!* and must be treated, as they deserve—with *silent* contempt!

III. When unable to repel the allegations brought against their system and themselves, and yet feeling that something must be said to save appearances, they attack the “*tone and temper*” of their antagonists, pronounce them “*ill-natured,*” of a “*bad spirit,*” and no “*better than infidels!*”—deeming this a valid refutation of incontestable arguments!

IV. They occasionally display their jesuitical bravado. Books and Tracts being circulated which they cannot refute—they pretend to rejoice in their dissemination, as sure to be useful to the church, in reclaiming its apostate children—perhaps on the “*pig-headed principle*” of always running backward, or directly contrary to the drover’s wishes!

V. But generally they make powerful efforts to prevent their people from reading works written against the church—as if conscious that their cause cannot stand the test of examination—and that conformists must be *kept in the dark* to be held in communion with the state-system—which to be fully known is to be speedily deserted by all good men!

VI. Conceiving much to lie in a title, and wishing to humble the minister they are unable to answer—they address him as simply MR. without the REV.! And though such a cropping of his plumes is laughed at by himself and all wise men; the sapient and courteous clergy fancy it a most *complete and terrible broadside* against dissent!

VII. When the church *wants the money* of dissenters, the latter are all legal members of it, the clergyman is also their pastor, and they have a right to interfere in all its affairs; but when they seek to reform the church and to render it more scriptural and useful, lo, they are obtrusive meddlers, have nothing to do with it, and should mind their own business!

VIII. They loudly condemn evangelical nonconformists for politically uniting with catholics in resisting *their common oppressor*, the church; yet they are perpetually fleeing to Popery for spiritual arms and arguments with which to oppose Protestant Dissenters! The former combination is profane and disgraceful, the latter is sacred and honorable!

IX. The more cautious and cunning of them make a mighty parade about the *scriptural truth* contained in their formularies—and which no one ever attacks—carefully concealing the evils which are daily assailed; as

if the good would sanctify the bad, even where all should be pure; and as if Popery and Socinianism might not be defended by a similar process!

X. They even appeal to our pity.—Many of the clergy being evangelical, they deem it unkind *to attack such good men*—and thereby injure their spiritual usefulness! As if truth were to be sacrificed on the altar of charity! Or as if they acted on the same principle in reference to dissenting ministers—equally pious and laborious with themselves!

XI. They industriously cram all the young they can lay hold of, with the soul-deluding heresies of their catechism and prayer book, and inoculate them with the virus of *hatred to the meeting house*—assure them that dissent is schism, that schism is a dreadful sin, and that it were better to be drunkards, swearers, or thieves, than dissenting schismatics!

XII. When these arguments fail, they recur to others, too many to name. But a very popular and effective one—borrowed from the worshippers of *the goddess Diana*—consists in exclaiming—“Our apostolical church!”—“Our venerable church!”—“The Church and Queen for ever!”—“The Lord bishop and clergy of the diocese for ever!”—“The Dean and Chapter for ever!”—“Three times three, and one more!”—Hurrah!!

THIRD.—THEIR EFFORTS TO INJURE DISSENTING COMMUNIONS.

I. *By unscrupulous legalized robbery.*—They commonly represent dissenting societies as few and poor, scarcely able to maintain their services in the humblest guise. And yet they compel them to pay largely towards the richly endowed church of England, in addition to supporting their own institutions. And if there be any demurring, furniture is seized and sold, a ruinous suit is commenced in the spiritual courts, and the poor nonconformist soon finds himself ensconced in a jail!

II. *By charging them with political disaffection.*—They liken them to Korah and his company, who resisted Moses and Aaron; and to Jeroboam, who made Israel to sin! They set them all down as disloyal, or as only half Englishmen; against whom the civil powers should be on their guard. For as church and state are united, like master and man, they conceive it impossible to love the one and despise the other!

III. *By bribery and corruption.*—To thin, and if possible, to destroy dissenting schools and congregations, many of them seem to mind no expence, nor to hesitate at the adoption of the most unworthy measures. What they cannot accomplish by personal efforts, they endeavour to effect through the agency of ignorant old ladies, bigotted poor-law guardians, or any others, willing to further their unrighteous projects!

IV. *By intimidation and persecution.*—Few are the dissenters, in any degree at the mercy of the parsons, but are made to feel the weight of their sectarian indignation. Most of them would willingly ruin every dissenter in the country; would deprive him of political and municipal power; and cheat every poor attendant at the chapel out of all parochial gifts and charities.

The above are true specimens of “The Sectarian Tactics of the National Clergy”—no parallel to which can be found among the most resolute and uncompromising dissenters. And the plain inference from the whole is, “THAT, THEREFORE, THE STATE-CHURCH IS NOT DEFENSIBLE “BY ANY LEGITIMATE REASONING, OR BY ANY FAIR APPEAL TO THE INFALLIBLE TESTIMONY OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.”

THE APPROACHING DOOM OF THE NATIONAL ESTABLISHMENT.

By the Rev. W. THORN, Winchester.

“Ye can discern the face of the sky, can ye not discern the signs of the times?”—MATT. xvi. 3.

OF late the bishops and other magnates of the hierarchy have been unusually energetic in encouraging their inferiors and friends with the assurance that the state-church is as stable as ever, if not increased in strength, piety, and usefulness. The MOTIVES for making such encouraging declarations may be found in the fears which many entertain of its safety. For, without the known existence of such painful apprehensions, the consoling language of these dignitaries would be wholly inappropriate. The subsequent reasons are probably assigned in justification of the opinion that the national system of worship is secure against every opposing power.

1. The erection of many new churches in various parts of the country.
2. The increasing zeal and activity of most parochial clergymen.
3. The numerous periodicals defending the ecclesiastical establishment.
4. The commutation of tithes, preventing much agrarian contention.
5. The vast numbers of children trained up in the national schools.
6. The union of the state with the church—powerfully protecting the latter.
7. The pecuniary interest of the nobility and gentry in the endowed church.
8. The ample revenues of the clergy with which to resist all aggression.
9. The respect naturally due to a cause so venerable for its antiquity.
10. The power the priesthood exercise over our legislative assemblies.

On these considerations the bishops and clergy build their hopes of the stability, permanency, and, perhaps, extension of the state-system. But while the writer is not disposed to underrate the force of the argument these churchmen adduce, nor to look upon the national establishment as likely to surrender to the power of truth and equity, without desperate and protracted struggles for existence; yet he thinks he can perceive means and agencies at work against it far more numerous and potent than all that are engaged for its defence, and which, in the end, will surely effect its destruction.

It must here be remarked, that he is not questioning the security, perpetuity, and ultimate triumph of the doctrines and precepts of the Bible, embodied in the creed and formularies of the church. These are imperishable—Heaven and earth shall pass away before one jot or tittle of them shall in any wise fail. God will preserve them; dissenters will never assail them—being even ready to suffer the loss of all things in their defence. But these are perfectly distinct from the establishment with which they are united, and would remain entire and divine were that destroyed to-morrow. In fact, their operation will be inconceivably more free and effective in this country whenever such a separation shall take place. It is for this reason that nonconformists so anxiously desire to see the state-system reduced to the condition of the primitive Christian communions.—To become such there must be—

1. The dissolution of the political union between the church and the state.
2. The secular appropriation of all national property held by the clergy.
3. The exemption of the people from all compulsory payments to religion.
4. The liberty of every congregation freely to elect its own office-bearers.

5. The power of the people to worship God as they deem most scriptural.
6. The exemption of the clergy from all creeds, oaths, and laws of human imposition.
7. The reduction of all rites, sacraments, &c. to the NEW TESTAMENT models.

In a word, the restoration of the church of England to the simplicity, voluntary support, doctrine, discipline, and agencies of the apostolic societies—from which it has so far and so fearfully departed. With this, and nothing less, can any faithful, enlightened, and attached disciple of Christ ever rest satisfied—and that this will be accomplished, at no very distant period, is the opinion of the writer—and the following are his reasons for arriving at this conclusion:—

I. *The growing enlightenment of the age.*—As the revival of literature in the 16th century greatly promoted the partial reformation of that period, so the greater knowledge of this era will materially aid in effecting a more complete reformation in the present. Such a system as that of the state-church cannot long exist with a well and scripturally enlightened people.

II. *The increasing attention paid to all church questions.*—There was a time when few periodicals ventured to assail the establishment, or to expose any of its numerous errors; hence most people heard little about them, and cared much less; but now they are among the leading topics of the press, and consequently of nearly every cottage and parlour in the realm.

III. *The altered character of our ecclesiastical controversy.*—Formerly the creeds, orders, expense, discipline, and ceremonials of the church, were almost the exclusive subjects of inquiry; but now its very existence, as a state-system, is chiefly assailed—this being the soil where its corruptions thrive, and the defence by which they have been guarded from destruction.

IV. *The recent admissions of the national clergy.*—Most conformists long contended that the doctrines and doings dissenters ascribed to the church were utterly false; but of late, to their surprise and dismay, the truth of nearly every such accusation is openly conceded by many of the most zealous, talented, and attached divines and heads of the establishment.

V. *The avowed popery of the state-worship.*—The true church party is confessedly far on its way to Rome; and if Dissenters continue to press it hard, on protestant principles, in Rome it will soon be ensconced. This is now opening the eyes of millions—showing them the popish character of the system, and the necessity of an immediate radical reformation.

VI. *The supercilious pretensions of the priesthood.*—These are teaching the intelligent public that the establishment cannot be defended by reason or revelation, and ought, therefore, no longer to exist, at the expense of the nation, and to the delusion of the people. It is truly felt, that men of sense would never flee to superstition if truth could defend them.

VII. *The rank and riotous toryism of most state-parsons*—whose policy is to keep the population in subjection to their own ghostly dominion—by labouring to prevent the enlightenment and elevation of the poorer classes. This is convincing the latter that the existence of the church depends on their degradation—which can be remedied only by its fall.

VIII. *The church is not in harmony with the age.*—It might have accorded with the dark and despotic era of its first establishment; but the

scenes are shifted; and as most other institutions are being altered or destroyed, to meet the growing light and liberties of the people, so the church must soon give way to the mighty influences of the times.

IX. *The rapidly growing disaffection towards the church.*—It now has adversaries in every parish; and enemies, to many of its rites and notions, in almost every pew. These, too, are increasing, and will continue to do so, in proportion to the diligence of the schoolmaster, the honest industry of dissenters, and the circulation of the Holy Scriptures.

X. *The great numerical increase of nonconformists.*—It is proved that the practical worshippers out of the church are much more numerous than those within it; that where conformists erect one sacred edifice dissenters build four or five; and that six or seven times more souls are really converted in the meeting-house, than in the church.

XI. *The present great political influence of dissenters.*—This is of recent origin. And as “the state-church is a mere political institution,” including legally and alike *all* British subjects, they can consistently exercise their civil powers for its removal. And in such a struggle they will be assisted by all truly honest and enlightened friends of civil and religious liberty.

XII. *The commercial independence of most anti-church men.*—Long has the high episcopalian party ceased to deal with, support, or employ their ecclesiastical opponents; who can, therefore, now act, in most cases, without destroying existing friendships, or running any very serious risks of suffering much more by their own consistency and zeal.

XIII. *The augmenting exertions of Protestant Dissenters.*—Never before were they, as a body, so alive to the subject of the establishment. Their pen is never dry, their press never still, and their publications are found in every village of the nation—carrying deep conviction to the minds of millions, till within a recent period totally ignorant of this momentous question.

XIV. *The increasing hatred to ecclesiastical injustice.*—Every generous churchman is beginning to feel that the state-religion inflicts most cruel wrongs on those who have to sustain their own respective institutions, by compelling them to pay indirectly millions every year to a sect whose sentiments they regard as most adverse to revelation.

XV. *The insatiate cupidity of the state-clergy*—which seems to be now more rife than at any former period. This is annoying the people, and convincing them that the fleece and not the flock—the money and not the soul—are the leading objects of clerical anxiety—and is greatly diminishing their attachment to such a rapacious system.

XVI. *The internal contentions of the hierarchy.*—It is a house completely dividing against itself—bishop against bishop—and priest against priest—and that too on topics of the most vital importance—and the contest is carried on with a heat which hardly finds a parallel in any political strife. Such a schismatical system must inevitably fail.

XVII. *The surrounding antagonists of the church.*—These are not all adversaries on the same grounds, but still are adversaries. Ireland and the catholics hate it as a robber and a persecutor—Scotland and the presbyterians rail at and condemn its “Prelacy and Popery”—and Wales and the Welsh have for the most part quitted the pale of its unholy fellowship.

XVIII. *The increasing necessities of the state.*—These would be effectually and permanently relieved by applying the property now held by the church to national purposes—as is done in many continental kingdoms. This appropriation would, at least, support all the poor, educate all their children, and maintain all our police establishments.

XIX. *The entire lordship of the state over the church.*—This is as rightful as over the army or navy. The legislature can constitutionally disband all the priesthood, seize all their revenues, and annihilate the whole system. In this respect the state-worship stands in perfect contrast to voluntary systems of dissent.

XX. *The great national changes of recent times.*—Of late, events have transpired little, if any thing, less than the ecclesiastical reformation previously specified, and against which about the same amount of hostility was raised, as is likely to oppose the efforts made against the hierarchy. But truth must ultimately prevail.

XXI. *The former veneration for the clergy is gone.*—Not many years ago they were regarded with superstitious reverence by the mass of their parishioners—who were ever ready to do battle at their bidding; but now, with few exceptions, the case is reversed; the clergy are regarded as men of like passions with themselves, and often as a great deal worse.

XXII. *The vast trouble the church occasions the state*—more than the army, navy, police, or any other national agency. It is the chief troubler of the senate, the country, and the parish, as well as the most expensive institution among us. That it will not be perpetually borne with by the public, admits not the doubt of a moment.

XXIII. *The growing condemnation of monopolies.*—One of the greatest, most oppressive, and most vexatious, is that of the state-religion—and as other iniquitous monopolies are doomed, this will certainly fall with them. It is not adapted to a free people, where civil and religious liberty are professed, and will soon be denounced by all just men.

XXIV. *The recent developments of the voluntary principle*—and these too not simply among dissenters, in America, in our Bible and missionary societies, but also in the church itself—where vast sums are annually raised for erecting new churches, assisting poor ministers, circulating books, educating the poor, and similar objects.

XXV. *The growing impression that the establishment is injurious.*—Churchmen begin to discover that it has done very little good—that it is enormously expensive—that it gives importance and permanency to error; and that, therefore, the cause of God would be greatly, presently, and permanently benefitted by its abolition.

XXVI. *The state-church is a chief member of the antichristian beast*—that proud, boasting, tyrannical beast of the Apocalyptic vision—which prophesy declares shall be destroyed—and, of course, our establishment with it. God is against it, truth is against it, and all really pious and intelligent bible christians must be against it—and insure its fall.

For the above reasons, and for many others which might be stated, the writer arrives at the conclusion, that—notwithstanding the power, zeal, activity, wealth, &c. of the national establishment—its doom is sure, and not very distant. As to the time of its fall, different persons will form different opinions; but all who rightly understand the oracles of heaven, and can wisely discern the signs of the times, will agree with him, that it is much passed the meridian of its existence. The Lord will hasten it in his time. And happy for the cause of Christ, for the souls of men, and for the country at large, will be the day when it shall be said, “OUR ECCLESIASTICAL ESTABLISHMENT ‘IS NO MORE!’”

A FAITHFUL ADDRESS TO ALL CANDID CONFORMISTS.

By the Rev. W. THORN, Winchester.

"Am I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?"—GAL. iv. 16.

TO the First Series of Tracts on "THE ERRORS AND EVILS OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND," the author appended a paper entitled, "A FRATERNAL APPEAL TO EVANGELICAL DISSENTERS." On closing the second, he purposes to subjoin "A FAITHFUL ADDRESS TO ALL CANDID CONFORMISTS." His present object, is—(1.) To offer a few explanatory observations on the entire course of tracts previously published—and (2.) To tender a few faithful admonitions, more especially to the lay members of the state-religion.

He limits his appeal to "Candid Conformists," under the conviction that such only will peruse with attention any controversial remarks made by a Dissenting minister, who has long and assiduously laboured to expose the unscriptural and injurious doctrines and doings of the system to which they professedly belong. Others, without careful or even any examination, condemn whatever is written against the national church, and assail the authors of it, as if necessarily influenced by any motive save that of a pious anxiety to promote the uncorrupted religion of Jesus Christ.

FIRST.—A FEW EXPLANATORY OBSERVATIONS *on the foregoing papers.*

I. *For whom the preceding tracts were intended.*—CHIEFLY for the younger and less enlightened portions of dissenting communions. The writer felt desirous of exhibiting before them, in more detail, and in a greater variety of forms and applications, than hitherto attempted, the numerous and grievous errors and evils of the religious system from which they have practically separated themselves; that their nonconformity might be more firmly founded on scriptural and well understood principles.—And SUBORDINATELY for the members of the church of England. He was anxious, if possible, to place in their hands, at the lowest price, a plain, full, varied, and incontrovertible view of the many serious objections felt against the state-religion by all well-informed dissenters, and, indeed, by many of the wisest and best men in that communion. How far he has succeeded in the attempt, the intelligent reader must judge for himself.

II. *The style and contents of these various publications.*—1. To compress into four pages the evidence and arguments which might be fairly expanded into forty, was found a task of no ordinary difficulty. And this condensation has caused an occasional abruptness of expression, which may seem harsh and unpolite to those who leave the cause of it out of their consideration.—2. To render each tract a complete essay in itself, it was necessary to introduce repeatedly the same facts and reasonings; though they will be found applied to the support of distinct propositions, and to the exposure of some fresh evil tendency in the national establishment.—3. Feeling the evils of the church deeply, and perceiving how seriously the cause of scriptural truth is injured, and the salvation of souls hindered, by them; he has expressed his sentiments strongly—but he believes not stronger than churchmen themselves, or than he was warranted to do by the word of God.—This, however, he can conscientiously aver, that he has in no case knowingly violated the sacredness of truth. Indeed, he has

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exercised the most rigid investigation into the evidence and inferences here presented to the public. And he fearlessly challenges his opponents to detect a single material error in any of these numerous publications.

III. *The objects aimed at through their circulation.*—These were, as previously stated,—1. To enlighten uninformed dissenters in the scriptural principles, christian privileges, and denominational obligations, of evangelical nonconformity; to render them firm and uncompromising in their profession; and to stimulate them to holy, active, and constant exertions against the national hierarchy.—And 2. To excite a general and powerful desire, on the part of the population at large, to obtain such an ecclesiastical reformation as shall assimilate our state-system to that constituted by the Apostles of Christ—feeling assured that the plans of Infinite Wisdom must be the best calculated to promote the glory of God and the salvation of men. These were his aims; and those who ascribe to him any inferior or contrary motives do him a gross injustice.

IV. *The manner in which they have been generally received.*—During the course of publication, about 200,000 tracts have been disposed of; and, upon the whole, their reception has been most gratifying to the writer. Many DISSENTING ministers and gentlemen, of different denominations, have expressed their cordial approbation of them, and have exerted their influence in endeavouring to circulate them widely over the country. The effects produced by their perusal, among various classes, have convinced the writer that his labours have not been in vain in the Lord.—Many EPISCOPALIANS of talent, station, and intelligence have also stated their conviction that all his allegations are true, and wished them the widest circulation. That the clergy in general should condemn them is what might be anticipated. They have, however, carefully abstained from formally replying to any of his leading arguments—proving or implying, beyond doubt, that their defenceless system is not a whit better than the writer has described it.

SECOND.—A FEW FAITHFUL ADMONITIONS to all candid conformists.

I. *You are practically more interested in this question than dissenters.*—The latter, with few exceptions, support the church only through compulsion; and thus far withhold their sanction of its evils. They speak, preach, and write against its corruptions; they are not involved in the sin of attending its services, nor of saying Amen to its unscriptural sentiments. But you pay willingly, and without protest; and but few of you faintly oppose its numerous and fearful evils. If, therefore, any guilt be attached to conformity, on you alone it will devolve in the great judgment day.

II. *You are bound to investigate well your own creed and profession,*—and to examine every plausible allegation brought against them. To ascertain to or adopt any religious profession, without examining into its real character is to display a disregard of duty, and a recklessness of consequences, ill-becoming a disciple of Christ. To induce an easy or ignorant conscience to acquiesce in any unscriptural practice, because it may be followed by the great, or be venerable for its age, is neither Christian-like nor wise; nor will it free any one from the guilt of transgression in the sight of God.

III. *Beware of the powerful influence of an unrighteous priesthood.*—This has been exemplified in every country and age. Its potency has been felt, especially among the young, the ignorant, and the confiding, and in few places more than in England. Its object is to render you servilely submissive to the clergy, to do all they enjoin, to believe all they say, and to give them all they demand. Be advised to copy the Bereans, and to examine the scriptures and judge for yourselves. Believe nothing advanced by the priesthood, without evident proofs from the word of God. Never forget that if through indolence, or ignorance, or implicit credence, you are found wanting at the last day, the ill-informed or unfaithful watchman will not suffer your portion of divine punishment.

IV. *Be sure in all cases to obey God rather than man,*—and in opposition to all the men in the world, if they enjoin what he has prohibited, or enforce, as spiritually obligatory, what he has not commanded. Remember that religion, abstractedly considered, does not consist in obeying the priest or the state, but in believing, loving, and obeying God—doing what he enjoins, and simply because he enjoins it. All else is will-worship, if not mental idolatry. You have no reasons for concluding that any service or modes of worship, which are contrary to, or essentially different from, such as God as prescribed, will ever meet his approbation, or draw down any thing on you but his insulted indignation.

V. *Study well the principles and procedure of Evangelical dissenters.*—Of these, most conformists are totally ignorant; and therefore naturally conclude that, bad as the church may be, dissent is no better. All kinds of notions and doings are unjustly ascribed to them, by their ill-informed and unscrupulous opponents—whose blind adherents believe the whole. But such erroneous conceptions are disreputable and dangerous. Nonconformists have their standard declarations and confessions of christian faith and practice, as well as the law-church. These are easily obtainable at a trifling cost, and may be understood without the least difficulty. To these you are referred, for full and safe information on this important subject; and the perusal of them will undoubtedly convince you that evangelical dissent is not chargeable with any of the gross errors and popish superstitions of the state-church, or any thing comparable with them.

VI. *Be not deluded by the pomp and glitter of the state-system.*—These are but puerile trappings and supercilious embellishments, invented by the adversary to hide the simplicity and beauty of the Christian religion. They may please the weak, and gratify a barbarous taste; but, so far from adding to the evidence and utility of the divine word, they materially detract from its force and efficiency. The great, the gay, the noble, and the learned in human lore, who are for having an aristocratical species of godliness, are not the best acquainted with spiritual truth, nor most under its power. A pompous ministry is rather an appeal to the senses than the judgment; and a gorgecus ritual does but divert the attention and affections from the cross. All this costly service, moreover, is paid for indirectly by the consumers of public produce—and towards which dissenters have to supply their proportion.

VII. *Cleave to the true principles of protestant christianity*,—"The bible, and the bible only."—Your orders, services, sacraments, and ceremonies are essentially papistical; and the great body of your clergy are now openly abetting the doctrines and doings of the Romish religion. They are making the scriptures bow to tradition, and explaining away the sense of God's word by appealing to the heterodox dogmas of the early and half-enlightened fathers of the church. They are, indeed, the misguided devotees and advocates of the man of sin. Be on your guard against their delusion; cleave closely to the word of God, as your sufficient, imperative, and exclusive directory in all spiritual matters. This is your duty; and in this lies your safety against all essential mistakes.

VIII. *Never willingly sanction or support any thing manifestly unscriptural*.—Such an act must ever be deprecated by all good men—and as much so when done in public worship as in a profligate theatre. A tacit countenance of what is felt to be opposed to the divine will, must surely be criminal in the sight of God, ever jealous of his exclusive sovereignty in the church; and yielding even a silent assent to a false doctrine, must be as inconsistent and wicked, as saying AMEN to a palpable falsehood. Besides, you are amenable to God for the sin of others committed through your example, under your sanction, and by your command. Lay this truth to heart, and carefully avoid encouraging, or willingly supporting, any notion or service which, in your own judgment, cannot be upheld by an appeal to the word of God.

IX. *Make temporal interests ever bow to spiritual obligations*.—Let no secular advantage, connexion, or honour, induce you to act in any way, or in any measure, contrary to your own sense of religious duty. This is frequently done; and by it the evils of the church are sustained. Multitudes will be of that profession which promises them the greatest success in business, or introduces them into what they call the most genteel society. Whatever is likely to involve them in present difficulties, or to lower their reputation in the sight of men, they cautiously avoid; even while secretly conscious that they are acting in direct opposition to the mind of the Saviour, and endangering their own immortal souls.

X. "*Do ye unto others as ye would they should do unto you*."—This is the command of the Son of God; and we sin in violating the duty it enforces. But it is grievously and constantly violated by the national church. Dissenters are such from conviction; and, with their views of God's word, would be exceedingly sinful in not dissenting. They are consequently compelled to support their own religious institutions at an expence, in many instances, highly oppressive. But you oblige them also to pay, directly or indirectly, millions every year to support your repudiated system. You likewise distress their consciences by compelling them to uphold and propagate rites and sentiments which they believe to be adverse to the mind of the Lord. Think how hard and wicked you would consider it, to be forced to maintain and diffuse doctrines and ceremonies which you conscientiously believe God denounces as contrary to his will, and which are calculated to do essential damage to the souls of men! "I speak as unto wise men: judge ye what I say."

But I have no space for enlargement. The above advice is given you with devout sincerity, and by one who wishes you every blessing which heaven can bestow; and I think it will commend itself to the judgment of all ingenuous and christian minds. But, THEN, it is clear, that a personal and practical compliance with it must soon draw the consistent believer out of the state-church; and that the general reception and observance of it will be the sure and speedy forerunner of the downfall of the national establishment of this country. The good Lord, hasten it in his time!

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